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Removing barriers to learning, enabling international schools to respond to diverse needs: identifying the climate and conditions

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REMOVING BARRIERS TO LEARNING, ENABLING INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS TO
RESPOND TO DIVERSE NEEDS: IDENTIFYING THE CLIMATE AND CONDITIONS

Jayne Pletser

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Education

University of Bath

Department of Education

February 2016

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Declaration of authenticity of the thesis

I hereby declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Education, contains no material previously published or written in any medium by another person, except where appropriate reference has been made.

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Abstract

While there was a wealth of research and documentation on meeting student learning needs in mainstream national schools, the world of international schooling appeared to have remained relatively untouched by the march towards inclusion. The motivation for this inquiry was to examine efforts to develop inclusive educational provision in the elementary department of an international school.

This small-scale study gave the researcher access to an international elementary school that was considered successful in responding flexibly to the needs of all learners. As there had been little research in the area of inclusion and international schooling the theory for this study was generated from the data and from a comparison with the findings of research on inclusion in national education systems. The research aimed to identify the climate and conditions present in the primary school at the time of the research by considering how it had removed barriers to learning for three students in different levels of learning support. A qualitative approach sought to use the data to understand the context and an 'emergent' design combining grounded theory and a case study approach was used. A central principle of constructivist grounded theory is that of giving voice to research participants and this study incorporated the voices, views and experiences of the students alongside their parents, educators and the specialists who worked with them.

Data was collected from interviews and multidisciplinary child study meetings. Interviews were carried out with the senior leadership team, the students, their parents and educators. Classroom observations were carried out to supplement interview data for the student in intensive levels of support and further data was collected from school documentation written for parents.

The findings indicated that the school climate was characterised by a strong focus on learning, access and solution seeking and the conditions found to support this climate were space and resources. Space was considered in terms of the use of space and the time required to facilitate both collaboration within the wider school community and collaborative teaching practices. Resources considered at the level of school organisation included personnel, therapies, policies and procedures, and the school curriculum. The overall findings from this study indicate that inclusion in this context was a process bound up in a proactive, dynamic, continuous cycle where a focus on solution seeking, learning and access drove the cycle.

Based on the findings from this small-scale study it is recommended that international schools locate inclusion in the arena of whole school development where learning, access and solution seeking drives the school development cycle. It is recognised that the emerging theory could not be divorced from the interpretations of the researcher and additional research by a diverse range of researchers, in diverse international school contexts is needed. To better inform international school leaders it is hoped that these results will become part of a larger body of research that better reflects the range of international school contexts.

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Background to this enquiry

At the time of starting this enquiry there was a wealth of research and documentation on meeting student learning needs in mainstream national schools. However, this was not true for the world of international schooling. The following comment made by Gatley (2004, cited in Haldimann and Hollington 2004) echoed my thoughts as an international school head:

‘Many school heads in my position are isolated from our national systems and find it increasingly difficult to come to terms with what we should be doing in our schools. We see more and more needs for student support but are limited in finding the advice that we would require in order to make a reasoned judgment about how to best help the situation.’
(p.7)

Literature relating to the support of learning international schools remains scarce and the majority of this literature is advice based upon practitioner experience. I located one piece of academic research (Bradley, 2000) which identified the inhibiting and facilitating factors of inclusive education in the international school where the researcher taught in Asia.

As a young educator teaching in international classrooms in the 1980s it quickly became apparent that there was little support as I developed my practice to meet the diverse needs of those students in my classroom. To clarify here I must add here that my long term experiences as an educator and school leader have been in small international schools and not the large, private, well-funded schools where professional development is usually well-developed. After my first international teaching experience in a school in Africa created for the children of missionaries I enrolled in a summer school to gain a certificate to teach English as a foreign language. Fully prepared, or so I thought, for my next teaching position in a newly set up international department in a Dutch school. However, there were many feelings of inadequacy and frustration as I wondered how I was going to help each one of these 20 students to reach their potential. In this class of 11-year old students only two of the students were English mother tongue; Angela had so many dyslexic traits I didn't know where to begin and before the event of internet, in a country where a trip to the library, unless my Dutch magically improved overnight, was not going to help and Peter; always funny, never on task, often out of school attending hospital appointments. Four of the students had no previous exposure to English and the rest of the class were all second (third or fourth) English language learners. I like to think that learning took place but I was never sure and the following year group contained an equal if not different set of challenges. There was no one to mentor me, my international colleagues were experiencing the same challenges and my Dutch colleagues had little experience or answers as the Dutch system had a strong system of special education (Meijer and Stephens, 1997). Local support services were in Dutch and very few people spoke the English necessary to support me, my international colleagues and our students (recent discussions with teachers confirm that this situation is experienced today by educators working in international schools across the globe).

Two summers later, a part-time educator and parent saw me researching into the possibilities of distance learning courses to increase my knowledge of all things special educational needs (SEN). My career as an educator and part-time student began with a postgraduate course in teaching

students with dyslexia, a Master of Arts (MA) in SEN followed, and now this enquiry focussing on inclusive education. I have risen through the ranks of school management, followed professional development courses as a special needs coordinator, and have completed the required courses to practice as a school administrator. The field of student learning, support for learning and inclusive education have always drawn me and have been common threads throughout my professional life; educator, school administrator and presently curriculum developer with responsibilities for inclusive education. The birth of my nephew who has autism, the collaboration with an international special education school and the parents of these children have continued to fuel questions and I continue to consider what inclusive schooling and effective learning might look like for a diverse population of learners.

It was with much frustration that I as a school leader had turned students away from the school. No longer a teacher with responsibilities only for those students in my class, I had become responsible for whole school development and learning across the whole community. I was overwhelmed by the implications with regard to resources, finance, knowledge distribution and sustainability in an ever shifting sea of student and staff turnover. School development and funding issues were further complicated by the fact that the school was embedded in a national context where the special educational system was thriving despite national directives and incentives to change (Meijer and Stevens, 1997). In addition I could find very little research based on practice to guide me and answer my questions.

Colleagues in my own school and our feeder schools were simply not engaging with the field. My sentiments of frustration had been echoed by Haldimann and Hollington (2004) when they stated 'It is not acceptable for international schools to state that they will not enrol children with special needs, since by definition all international children have Special Needs' (p.9). We had not moved on but optimistically I believed that was in part due to a lack of guidance and research and it was this frustration tinged with optimism that laid the foundations for this enquiry. This enquiry I hope will contribute to the research base and organisational learning and practice in the field of inclusive, international education.

Aims of this enquiry

As an educator and researcher I wanted to take a look inside an international school that was considered successful in meeting the needs of a range of learners. I wanted to know what the barriers to learning were for a group of students, how the school had removed the barriers, if indeed they had and how they knew that they had removed them. Finally I wanted to discover what the implications for school organisation and development were for removing those barriers that had not yet been removed. The motivation then for this enquiry was to go beyond the consideration of the learning needs of individual students and to consider the organisational aspects of removing barriers to learning. This small-scale research enquiry provided me with the opportunity to take a look inside an inclusive international school and it is intended that this project will add to the small research base and provide knowledge for both understanding and action.

A case study of three students in an international, inclusive school was carried out to help identify the climate and the conditions that the school had developed to meet student learning needs. The study used a qualitative approach as it sought to analyse the data collected to understand and

explain the context. Data was made from interviews with three students, their teachers and parents and the senior management team (SMT). School led, child study meetings were attended and student observations were carried out to supplement the interview with the student receiving intensive levels of support and school documentation was collected and its content analysed.

The enquiry outline

This thesis consists of six chapters including this first introductory chapter. Chapter Two, the literature review discusses the literature that was available at the time of embarking on this study. Chapter Three is concerned with describing the methodology, the methods of data collection and the data analysis process. Chapter Four, 'In the field' discusses the data collection process and describes the school context while Chapter Five discusses the findings and the final chapter concludes, reflects and recommends.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEWING THE LITERATURE

The aim of this research was to consider what the barriers to learning were for three primary aged students in one international school; how the school had removed the barriers; how the school knew that the barriers had been removed; and finally, the implications for school development when barriers to learning for these students remained. The focus of the literature review was designed to answer the research questions; however, little research had been carried out in the international school sector and although theoretical perspectives were found that applied in other contexts, no well-developed approach in the international school sector was found. This literature review will then share the 'guiding interests, sensitising concepts and disciplinary perspectives' (Charmaz 2006) which influenced my own practice and provided the point of departure for this enquiry.

The scope of the literature reviewed included that related to the meaning of 'barriers to learning', the context of international schooling and international students, removing barriers to learning in international schools and the learning support literature written specifically for the international school sector.

2.1 Setting the context

In setting the context I will interrogate the different meanings of 'barriers to learning' and the implications for the leadership and management of international schools, consider the learning barriers facing internationally-mobile students, and explore the range of terminology used when discussing learning support. The section will finish with a discussion of the term 'inclusion' and the notion of effective schools and inclusion.

Barriers to learning

The choice to focus on removing barriers to learning in this study is compatible with the social model of disability, in which it is school imposed barriers to learning that present challenges to the learning of individual students. Disability in the social disability model is considered a social construct: 'society's failure... to ensure the needs of disabled people are fully taken into account in its social organisation' (Oliver 1996, cited by Porter and Lacey 2005, p.139). The social model of disability recognizes that changes to the learning environment positively influence learning outcomes. Barriers to (individual student) learning may be found in buildings and physical obstacles, school organisation, cultures and policies, relationships between members of the community and approaches to teaching and learning (Booth and Ainscow 2002).

The social model of disability challenges the assumptions that learners are different, are limited and therefore need different curricula, different approaches to teaching and learning and different schools. It also challenges the associated stigma and lowering of teacher expectations (Booth and Ainscow 2002) when students are labelled according to identified special needs.

In opposition to the notion that barriers to learning are social constructs (Clough and Barton 1995) is the belief that learning issues are located within the student. In this student-deficit model, the student is considered to be restricted and deemed to be unable to perform within the considered ranges of normal (as established by educational and medical professionals). In this medical model of

disability, interventions to support learning are usually driven by the need to 'normalise' performance or the bodies of individuals.

While many international school heads would agree with the ideals of the social model it would appear from the literature (Haldimann and Hollington 2004, Hayden 2006) that in reality the practice is very different. The literature available largely reflects a medical model of disability and students are considered in terms of their 'special needs' and labelled according to medical models. Specialist expertise in this literature is recommended so that approaches to diagnosis, intervention and effective teaching and learning practices can be realised.

In acknowledging the complex educational and sometimes medical experiences of many international students, a further model of disability is proposed: critical realism. According to its main proponent, 'people are disabled by society and by their bodies' (Shakespeare 2009, p.186). Shakespeare argues that the critical perspective bridges the gap between the medical and social models of disability. The critical realistic perspective recognises the interaction that takes place between the individual and the environment. This interactional approach takes into account 'different levels of experience, ranging from the medical, through the psychological, to the environmental, economic and political' (p.190) and includes personal attitudes and motivation. While guided mainly by the emphasis on removing barriers that arise from the social model, the validity of the notion of the disability experience stemming from this critical realist perspective is recognised. Understanding the external reality of students through adopting a critical realistic perspective (Shakespeare 2009) would provide teachers with the opportunity to explore previous experiences and identify optimal approaches to removing barriers to learning for individual students. The international education experience often complicated by frequent relocation to different countries and schools, combined with an identified learning challenge or disability and the 'disability experience' (Shakespeare 2009, p. 186) of the student could be very complex indeed. Shakespeare's notion of 'disability experience' may have relevance and resonance for students and their teachers in international schools.

International Schooling

At the time of writing up this enquiry data from The International School Consultancy Group (ISC) indicated that there were 7,017 international schools using English as the language of instruction, serving 3.5 million students. In addition to the growing numbers of expatriate students it was reported that growing numbers of local students were enrolling in international schools using them as gateways to universities across the world. International schools are diverse in their nature and have a range of curricula to choose from; both national and international. They may cater for any age group and the ISC reports that they expect to see this diversity in international school organisation continue to grow. As Hayden (2006) explains few assumptions can be made about a school that defines itself as an international school and it is for this reason that the international school in this enquiry is described more fully in the data collection process.

With the absence of local schools to attend, except in some limited circumstances where governments offer international subsidised education to attract international families to their country, international schools fulfil the function of educating this group of globally mobile students. The schools are mainly private but school fees are usually covered by the international employment packages (Hayden 2006) offered to globally mobile parents.

The highly-mobile students who attend international schools have been referred to as global nomads; transnational families and transnational elites where they are 'perceived as mobile rather than migrant', and where they are described as 'bestowing their presence and skills on the receiving nation rather thanimposing or even inflicting their needs on the receiving country' (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, cited by Hayden 2006 p.42).

Leading and Managing International Schools

Are there implications for removing barriers to learning in the way that international schools are led and managed? There is little consistency in how international schools throughout the world are led, but Blandford and Shaw (2001) have described how dealing with the many cultures present in the school population, the often rapid, unpredictable turnover of students, staff and administration and the isolation of the school adds a layer of complexity to the international school context.

Balancing decisions and judgements on a range of issues, including recruitment and intercultural interaction is more complex when there is a mixed-cultural make up of staff, students and board members. The perception of differences may vary between cultures and cultural contexts (Miles and Ainscow 2011) with implications for developing professional cultures that are open to removing barriers to learning. The development of good communication (Blandford and Shaw 2001) to cultivate common understandings and practice is crucial if schools are to remove barriers to learning and be successful in meeting the differing expectations of culturally diverse populations.

Educational administrators of international schools face a number of challenges that are exacerbated by their context. The transient nature of the whole school community challenges the development of common understandings, the consolidation of organisational knowledge and practice in removing barriers to learning. When staff and student turnover is high, school stability is challenged, and it may be further compromised when interference and challenges to the school leadership are mounted by members of the board—sometimes leading to the departure of the school leader before the end of the contract (Blandford and Shaw 2001). A constantly shifting school population and its constantly shifting needs poses a nearly impossible challenge to schools committed to an expert driven, medical model of disability. A lack of expert staff is a common reason to exclude and drives the creation of many international school admission policies.

The institutional philosophy, organisation or management of international schools may be affected by host country laws, education policies, inspection regimes and or funding which in turn may challenge and influence practice around removing barriers to learning. The Dutch International schools (DIS), set up to meet the needs of the families temporarily residing in The Netherlands are one such group of schools. The Dutch education system is a segregated system of mainstream and special education which caters to the needs of students grouped into four clusters to meet the needs of students with visual and hearing impairments, deafness, hearing, speech disorders, cognitive and physical impairments, chronic illness, behavioural issues and long term sickness. However, there are no facilities that take into account the needs of internationally mobile students in these schools and funding is not provided to the mainstream international departments to take these students. In an attempt to meet the needs of the international community one primary international special education school has been created. The fees for this school are high and many students who would benefit from the services are excluded either for geographical or financial reasons.

An international school, like all schools, must make decisions curriculum, finance and the allocation of parental fees, school organisation, and leadership and management. Each of these administrative decisions affects how a school identifies and removes barriers to learning. If an international curriculum is to be run alongside the national curriculum, staffing and timetabling take on added complexity that are not without financial implications (Hayden 2006). Such arrangements can challenge the ability to remove barriers if the national curriculum and its accompanying inspection regime are not supportive of removing barriers to learning.

Gatley (2004) has commented upon the isolation from the national education system that many international school leaders find themselves in. This isolation is described as challenging in terms of accessing appropriate advice, and confounded by the reliance on employing transient 'Special Needs' teachers who are experienced learning support teachers but don't always have the international school experience. These teachers according to Gatley may possess little international school experience and therefore lack the knowledge to fully understand this group of students and the barriers that may exist to their learning (see next section).

Isolation from the national system is also experienced when there is little or no access to specialised support staff such as speech and language (S<) and occupational therapists (OTs) who speak the same language as the students. When members of the school community do possess the needed knowledge and skills, they are often unable to obtain the relevant licences to practice in the host country.

The learning challenges facing internationally mobile students

Classrooms in international schools are characterised by their diversity in terms of language, culture, nationality and educational background (Hayden 2006 Blandford and Shaw 2011). Arguably, this is no different to classrooms in many national settings. However, as previously stated, many students in international schools are globally mobile moving from country to country and school to school, often on a regular basis. According to Sears and Grimshaw (2008), an important task for international educators is that of supporting students in coping with the resulting 'sense of cultural disjuncture and alienation' (p.262). Relocation is often unpredictable and can take place during the school year. This shifting, unpredictable student population renders international schools unable to reliably forecast the short and long term learning needs of its student body. The implications for the provision of professional knowledge and removing barriers to learning are further impacted when schools are isolated from and cannot call upon local learning support services.

There are positive effects of being internationally mobile such as the development of 'patience, flexibility, linguistic abilities, and sophisticated diplomacy' (Killham 1990, cited by Langford 1998, p.30). However, internationally-mobile students encounter an obstacle course of barriers to learning as they negotiate a variety of school settings. Students moving around the world must develop competencies in accommodating new languages, new cultures, new homes, new schools, new curricula and in negotiating gaps in their learning and new expectations upon them. However, appropriate behaviours may suddenly become inappropriate and 'unresolved grief at the loss of their secure world, the loss of status, possessions and, most importantly, the continual loss of relationships' (Ezra 2003, p.126) is a very real emotion for many international students. For those students not on the move, many in their peer group are, and the experience of loss and grief for

departed friends is also very real. Learning success for this group of students implies meeting the social and emotional aspects of learning in addition to the cognitive aspects.

Language is a further complicating factor for internationally-mobile students. What are the implications for learning for the student who moves to a new location when the language of instruction and the language outside of the home are not the mother tongue? In many cases, the language of instruction in school is different from the students' home language, a situation which has major implications for school organisation and the provision of language classes and counselling. Language is associated with our notion of self, and this group of mobile students are at the 'centre of a dynamic process of interaction between language, culture and identity' (Grimshaw and Sears 2008, p.268). Students who are multilingual 'manage multiple identities in their different languages, and that each of these languages may be associated with distinct sets of values and behaviours' (p.266) (Pellegrino 2005, cited by Grimshaw and Sears 2008, p.267) has argued that it is not unusual for students to experience a 'crisis of the self' before communication in a new language is mastered. One's self-image is threatened as one's ability to express one's self in characteristic ways are limited.

The development of the language of instruction especially if this is different from the child's mother tongue is of high priority as 'the relationship between language and culture is complex and fundamental to the socialisation and academic achievement of the students' (Ezra 2003, p 127). However, mother tongue proficiency is also necessary for foreign language learning (Cummins 1985 cited by Ezra 2003, p. 140) and Ezra (2003) considers that cognitive and linguistic mother tongue development transfers to the new language and therefore home language maintenance is necessary for successful learning in a new language. Mother tongue proficiency is recognised in many international schools where mother tongue classes are also promoted to help address the issue of 'semi-linguals' (Sears 1998, cited by Ezra 2003, p. 141). The creation of 'semi-linguals' (Sears 1998, cited by Ezra 2003, p. 141). where academic proficiency is not reached in any of the students' languages is a risk that many students face if schools do not fully understand or address language learning needs (Sears 1998, cited by Ezra 2003).

Consider the challenges and barriers to learning already discussed for this group of international school students, and add it to any identified learning support needs and one may be talking about a large population of students. Haldimann (1998) commented that 'taken as a whole, they may represent the majority of students' (p.132).

SEN, special needs, learning support – which terminology?

When embarking on this study there was much discussion both in the United Kingdom and in the literature consulted around the use of the term special educational needs (SEN). In the UK, Booth and Ainscow (2002) had argued that the special educational needs label had led to lowered expectations by teachers and had deflected attention from the real sources of difficulty which they considered to be in the areas of relationships, cultures, curricula, teaching and learning approaches, school organisation and policy. 'Barriers to learning and participation' (Booth and Ainscow, 2004, p.4) were proposed as an alternative language to that of SEN and its associated lowered expectations and medical deficit approaches.

Haldimann & Hollington (2004) titled their first chapter as 'What are Special Needs? What are we talking about?' They commented on the sensitive nature and the difficulty of the definition of the

term 'special needs'. Hayden (2006) summed this up when she referred to the use of the term in international schools:

'The very term used to describe such needs (special educational needs) is itself potentially controversial and can seem to change regularly within one national context, let alone across the host of cultures, nationalities and languages in which international schools operate. A number of once-used descriptions would today be considered offensive and it is difficult to be sure, unless one is an expert in this area, whether the terminology being used is currently considered appropriate and has not been superseded by more recent developments' (p64).

While the term SEN was understood in the UK in the context of meeting diverse needs within the mainstream classroom in my own working context it was often misunderstood. When translated by parents or host county practitioners it became confused with special education and created barriers to engaging international parents in discussions as to how best support their children. The term learning support usually accepted by parents was seen as an extension of the expected and accepted language support given when the student was unfamiliar with the language of instruction.

Inclusion

Inclusion is a term used in the international school context with reference to removing barriers to learning. However it is not enough to assume that one knows what is meant when inclusion is being referred to or who is being included when an international school uses the term.

Removing barriers to learning and enabling schools to respond to and include diverse needs in their student population is a challenge to schools and countries worldwide. Ainscow and Miles (2008) considered inclusive education from the perspective of educational provision describing how many developing countries continue to struggle with providing education for primary age students while more developed countries remain challenged in providing for those students who have been excluded from mainstream education and are not prepared to enter mainstream life. The high numbers of students leaving schools with no qualifications and the difficulties of harnessing the talents of disaffected students where school bears no relevance to their lives is a shared challenge across the globe (Ainscow and Miles, 2008). International schools are not immune to any of these challenges and as previously discussed many international schools make conscious decisions to exclude groups of students from their schools.

The core business of many international schools is that of creating international citizens through promoting respect for diversity (Catling 2001). Pertinent to this context is the diversity perspective on inclusive education taken by Florian and Kershner (2009). They stated that 'inclusive education is distinguished by an acceptance of differences between students as an ordinary aspect of human development' (2009 p.173). While few international school leaders would argue with this statement with regard to cultural and language diversity, it would be appropriate for many to consider this with regard to learning and disability.

Slee (2000, cited by Rayner 2007, p.36) referred to the discourses that 'exclude on the basis of a range of student characteristics, including class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, perceived level of ability or disability, or age' (2000 p.36). Many international school leaders would claim that they are already successful at removing barriers to learning for a diverse range of learners and have curricula and

strategies in place to take into account and affirm student identities and needs with regard to class, race and ethnicity. However, confronting the range of student characteristics referred to by Slee (2000, cited by Rayner 2007, p.36) to include the notions of ability, disability, gender and sexuality many would be faced with the limits to inclusion in their school contexts.

Effective schools and inclusion

Lunt and Norwich (1999) posed the question 'Can effective schools be inclusive schools?' A question that international schools leaders would be expected to defend when questioned by fee-paying parents, the board of governors or school owners. Lunt and Norwich concluded 'that in the dominant conception of effectiveness, we cannot answer in the affirmative' (p.84) but went on to conclude 'that it is more valid to talk about schools that are effective in relation to specific criteria, for specific groups of pupils and at a particular period of time' (p.84). This statement takes into account the reality of the school context and the need to confront the limits to inclusion to further develop their practices to increase access and participation.

A study by James, Connolly, Dunning and Elliott (2006) into 'How Very Effective Primary Schools Work' found the central characteristics of effective schools to be 'A productive, strong, and highly inclusive culture that focused on ensuring effective and enriched teaching for learning for all pupils' (p.79). Rouse and Florian (1996, cited by Skidmore 2004, p.22) combined their own research with school effectiveness research to define the characteristics of the effective inclusive school which they named as a common mission and a learning focused climate.

International school leaders may well be comforted with the claims made by Rayner (2007) that the features of an effective school resemble those used to describe inclusive schools and that inclusive schools are 'grounded in an ideal of education reform, change and school improvement' (p. 106). His indicators for inclusive education (student choice, co-operative and collaborative learning activities that are experimental, inductive and hands-on, in class support arrangements, the promotion of independent learning, and on-going concern for the processes of learning, formative and authentic assessment in conjunction with standardised assessment, and stakeholder engagement and participation) identify with teaching and learning strategies claimed by international schools to be features of their education.

2.2 Removing barriers to learning in international schools

This section will consider barriers to learning and the pedagogies available to international educators to support them in removing barriers to learning. The barriers are discussed with respect to changing mindsets, resources and facilities, and student experiences.

Barriers to learning

Changing mindsets

Developing common understandings across an international school community will arguably involve changing mindsets. Skidmore (2004) identified two contrasting forms of discourse in schools that of deviance and inclusion. Discourse, in this context referred to the use of vocabulary and the 'underlying grammar of reasoning' (p.112). International school leaders should consider how this grammar plays out in their school communities with a view to developing a discourse of inclusion, to change mindsets throughout the whole community.

In schools where Skidmore's 'discourse of deviance' was identified, teachers considered students in terms of their cognitive abilities and accorded perceived limits on their learning. Learning difficulties were attributed to the student, deficits and weaknesses could be remediated and student needs required the intervention of experts and specialist curricula.

In a 'discourse of inclusion' teachers believed that all pupils had an open-ended potential for learning and it is the inflexible, insufficiently responsive curriculum that is the source of learning difficulties. Where inclusionary thinking was present, teachers sought to reform curriculum and develop pedagogy; they believed that expertise should involve supporting the participation of all pupils in the learning process. The development of a discourse of inclusion in international schools would support those who need to develop inclusionary thinking and inclusive practices, while empowering those team members who are ready to embrace such change. The parent body and school board are often influential members of the international school community and their engagement is crucial if the myth that inclusion leads to the lowering of school standards is to be challenged.

The implications for developing inclusive practices are considerable and go beyond the lack of vision, the unwillingness to share resources, to that of national legislation which may govern international school funding and influence thinking and approaches to developing practice (Hayden 2006). If legislation is based upon a system of mainstream and special schooling then funding strategies and quality assurance frameworks will work against the inclusion of some students into the school. In some national contexts students with identified needs may only be taught by licensed special needs teachers in specially licensed schools. Such contexts may severely challenge international schools in developing inclusive mindsets and practices across a diverse school community.

The exclusion of international students with identified learning support needs has resulted in school cultures and school leaders who have been isolated from the field of learning support. A lack of experience in working with or understanding the needs of a diverse range of learners will challenge a school's ability to develop and change mindsets or work with those who have an already developed inclusive mindset.

Resources and facilities

Gatley (2004) in the commentary for the book; *Effective learning support in international schools* comments on the isolation of an international school leader from a national system of learning support and cites this as a reason why international schools find it difficult to remove barriers to learning for all students.

Isolation from resources such as learning support specialists is acute in many international schools. A lack of access to specialists in the local community may contribute to the creation of international school admission policies that exclude students. However, while there is a group of international schools and their school leaders who despite their isolation seek to develop their inclusive practices, there are undoubtedly international schools that create admission policies and procedures to exclude students on the basis of their learning support requirements. Screening procedures for admission may involve standardized language and/or mathematics assessments and students with identified needs are expected to submit relevant documentation. Some students will be required to undergo further screening or diagnostic assessments, often at the cost of the parent if initial school assessment indicates this.

An application from a student who does not need specific learning support but needs wheelchair access is an issue if this has not been considered in long term planning. The installation of ramps and lifts can be very difficult and may implicate a lack of legislation to promote inclusion in the community. In my own experience the inability of the stair wells to be restructured due to fire safety issues and the lack of disability rights legislation to influence planning and permission became exclusionary factors.

Reflection on student experiences to create cultures of belonging

An international classroom is characterised by a mix of cultures and languages in addition to a shifting population of students. Creating places of belonging for all students should be a major goal for international schools if students are to overcome the 'sense of cultural disjuncture and alienation' (Sears and Grimshaw 2008, p.262) already discussed. If learning barriers are to be removed it is important that educators understand their students; their unique experiences and the influence that this may have on their learning. For students entering a school with already identified disabilities an understanding of their 'disability experience', as described by Shakespeare (2009) will help to identify barriers to learning that have been created by previous experiences. Creating a culture of belonging for all members of the school community promotes the development of an understanding of the strengths, needs and challenges of all members of their school community.

Pedagogies for removing barriers to learning in international schools

This section will discuss pedagogies considered to be relevant to the international school context. An inclusive pedagogy was proposed by Nind and Wearmouth (2005, cited by Rayner 2007). From a systematic review of 68 studies into effective approaches to include SEN pupils in the mainstream classroom they identified key principles of an inclusive pedagogy. The key principles identified were the setting of suitable learning challenges, responding to diverse learning needs, and overcoming barriers to learning and assessment.

Rayner's work (2007) draws upon the fields of educational management and leadership, special educational needs, and inclusion. While work and practice is UK focussed, he has claimed that the ideas and arguments are relevant to the international setting. Learning differences are managed through a differential pedagogy that moves beyond 'ability based conceptions' and 'needs-led, deficit orientated forms of assessment' (p.173). The differentiated pedagogy and assessment strategies proposed are aimed at the development of inclusive school cultures that foster the use of metacognitive strategies and the development of common understandings to develop practice. Recognising the complexity of the school context, Rayner's approach encourages school leaders to 'reflect on their own place and time' (p.1) and engage with the theory 'to generate new ideas and knowledge' (p.2) suited to individual contexts and school community needs. Challenging performance and ability driven agendas of school boards and owners is a major task for many international school leaders and considering research based evidence that moves beyond ability based conceptions is arguably a valuable approach for school leaders to reflect upon.

The social and emotional barriers to learning incurred when students are globally mobile and the need to teach beyond cognitive aspects have been previously discussed. The transformability model proposed by Hart, Dixon, Drummond and McIntyre (2007) involves teaching in the affective, social and cognitive domains. Teaching in the affective domain addresses feelings of safety, competence, enjoyment, identity, hope and confidence in their students. Teaching in the social domain addresses

acceptance and belonging and enhances social and collaborative skills whereas teaching in the cognitive domain addresses access to worthwhile learning, relevance, connections and enhances the powers of thinking, reasoning and explaining. Hart et al. (2007) argue that the capacity to learn is enhanced when teaching takes place in the core domains and decision-making is driven by a need to include all members of the learning community and is based upon co-agency and trust. Learning capacity is understood as a 'situated concept' (p.509) and influenced by the interplay of both internal and external influences. Transformability claims to challenge ability-based teaching and the individual-deficit account of learning both of which are found in international schools.

While many international schools have used a lack of resources and access to specialist knowledge as a reason to exclude students, Lewis and Norwich (2005) proposed that a continua of teaching approaches (as opposed to more intensive and explicit strategies) better captured the teaching needs of students 'with different patterns and degrees of learning difficulties' (p.5). Lewis and Norwich (2005) critically reviewed 'possible claims about the nature, role and extent of specialization in teaching children with a range of' (p.13) needs. The reviews and critiques were carried out by specialists working within identified fields and according to a set of general questions which focused on 'pedagogic strategies in their interactions with teaching knowledge and curriculum design' (p.13). (The identified needs addressed were deafness, visual impairment, deafblindness, severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, children with Down's syndrome, language and communication needs including those with additional language needs, autistic spectrum disorders, AD/HD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, moderate learning difficulties and low attainment). Their research indicated that a systematic and explicit application of a continua of effective teaching strategies were more appropriate than specialist teaching.

I have previously argued that international educators need to embrace the varied learning experiences of their students to understand where barriers to learning exist. This sociocultural perspective draws on the work of Vygotsky (1978, cited by Skidmore 2007, p.122) and embraces the rich life and learning experiences of students. It is sensitive to both language and culture making it particularly relevant to international classrooms where the promotion of the home language and culture is both valued and developed (Cummins 2010).

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) proposed by Vygotsky (1978, cited by Skidmore 2007, p.122) is often referred to and referenced by the curricula marketed to international schools, and it is not unusual for presenters at international school conferences to discuss their practice and the learning of their students with reference to the ZPD. Valenzuela (2007) explains that in the ZPD, cognitive development is considered to emerge 'as a result of interactions within a cultural and historical context, rather than unfolding in a biologically driven sequence' (p.280). Social cultural theory offers international schools a possible place to address what Valenzuela refers to as 'critical issues' (p.287) where teachers focus on the social context of individual student development and take into account their dynamic contexts and the dynamic processes that influence their learning. This understanding is particularly significant if complex student experiences and barriers to learning are to be fully understood, acknowledged and accommodated.

Teaching and learning is characterised in sociocultural perspectives by the emphasis on the interaction between partners in the learning environment. Florian and Kershner (2009) suggest that

the challenges of understanding, and accommodating students in all their diversity is enhanced through collaboration so that 'all the sociocultural resources of the school, community and wider knowledge from other teachers and researchers' (p.180) are drawn upon. Experts and novices collaborate to reach common goals and a variety of forms both verbal and non-verbal such as signs, looks and pauses are used to support learning. The 'reciprocal, transactional nature' (Valenzuela, 2007 p.284) of this interaction is felt by Valenzuela (2007) to be crucial when pupil and teachers 'come from different cultural, socioeconomic and experiential backgrounds' (p.284) as found in international schools.

Although social inclusion is claimed by many international schools its extent is often limited to those students capable of fitting into the existing school ethos and organisational structures and thus remains an area of development for many international schools. The social justice framework proposed by Shepherd and Hasazi (2007) is based upon the values, beliefs, knowledge, and skills that the authors claim are needed if schools are to ensure inclusive schooling and have the 'capacity to support students with disabilities and their families' (p. 476). The authors claim that the framework supports academic achievement and offers high quality experiences for all and promotes the development of social justice to promote social inclusion. Social inclusion, according to the authors ensures 'that all students have access to equal opportunities and outcomes that will in turn lead to full citizenship and actualization of their full potential' (p.476). The construction of shared understandings across a school community is arguably a major undertaking when the population is in constant flux, so this framework, which according to the authors supports schools in developing common understandings, is particularly relevant to international school leaders. Multicultural education, democratic discourse and community engagement have been mentioned as characteristics of successful international school communities (Blandford and Shaw 2001, Hayden 2006) all of which are features (Shepherd and Hasazi 2007) of the social inclusion framework. The similarity between the two perspectives suggest that the social justice framework is an approach that could satisfy the needs of Gatley (2004) and his colleagues in removing barriers to learning and creating inclusive school climates.

2.3 Support for learning in international schools, the literature reviewed

This section will consider the scarce literature written specifically to support learning in international schools.

In 1998, Haldimann remarked that 'research pertaining to special learning needs populations in international schools is relatively uncommon' (p.133), and this situation appeared to have remained relatively unchanged at the time of carrying out the literature review. The Education Resource Information Center (ERIC) alongside professional literature and readings from my master's dissertation informed the literature review. The literature reviewed included one book section (Hayden 2006), one book chapter (Hayden and Thompson eds., 1998) and two books (Kusuma-Powell & Powell, 2000 and Haldimann and Hollington 2004) written specifically for international schools and one research project (Bradley 2000). Also considered relevant to this literature review was the section pertaining to student support services in the Council of International Schools (CIS) accreditation manual.

In 2006 the chapter dealing with the international school experience of globally mobile students considers the special needs of international students (Hayden, 2006). The book; Introduction to

international education focusses on the context of international education, the schools, the stakeholders, the teachers and administrators, the curriculum and the external influences on international schools.

Hayden (2006) considers the potentially controversial use of terminology to describe student needs, the lack of provision and the lack of requirements on international schools to provide for special needs. Students identified as gifted are included in this group of students. The complex notion of giftedness; its identification and the development of learning in students identified as gifted is discussed. Hayden (2006) proposes that the well-educated professional nature of the parents could contribute to potentially high numbers of students described as gifted in the international school population. The high proportion of international students who go on to university level study is suggested as a possible indicator that the international school population is gifted. However, with no hard research evidence offered to back the suggestion and the existence of exclusive admission criteria to enter pre-university courses this proposed indicator of giftedness is questionable and more research in this areas is welcomed.

The challenges posed by culturally diverse parent populations of parents are considered by Hayden (2006) with respect to increasing access and participation in international schools. She considers the existence of exclusive admission policies, found in many international schools to result in the wariness of parents in disclosing the learning needs of their children for fear of being turned away. Escaping from diagnostic labels is another reason, reported by Hayden (2006) as to why parents may not disclose the learning needs of their children. When learning needs have not been declared the school struggles to support the student. Frustrations from both parents and teachers endanger the collaborative processes necessary to meet the needs of the student. Learning needs and disability are not accepted in many cultures and therefore any diagnostic and identification processes that the school may wish to initiate may be blocked by parents. Hayden (2006) also reports that a diagnosed learning difficulty may result in the child 'being punished or ostracised' (p.67). The difficulties of carrying out diagnostic evaluations, the employment of specialists and the question of who is to pay for resources and staff when schools are not serviced by the local community are all considered in this section. Hayden (2006) refers to the inclusive international school reviewed by Bradley (2000) as unusual among international schools. She further cites Bradley's arguments that inclusive education benefits all students as it provides access to mainstream students to 'additional learning opportunities' (p.68).

In 1998 the Optimal Match Concept was discussed in the book *International Education: principles and practice* (Hayden and Thompson 1998) and the chapter entitled 'Special learning needs in international schools: the optimal match concept' was written by Haldimann. The Optimal Match Concept was described by Haldimann (1998) as 'the fine-tuning of curricula to match individual students demonstrated level and ideal pace of learning' (p. 133) and would appear to accord with a social model of disability. However, in opposition to this and in the same chapter, a case study school described that the students were screened to determine if they were 'an optimal match for the type of programme' (p.135). This conflicting information confirms Gatley's (2004) concerns that it is difficult to find 'advice to make a reasoned judgement' (p.7). The Optimal Match Concept is considered by Haldimann (1998) as an approach to support international schools. While it might support schools it does not match the aspirations of creating inclusive schools as it is centred on a system where mainstream and special education exist in tandem.

The Optimal Match Concept conceived in 1986 by the US Office of Overseas Schools and the Association of American Schools in South America was proposed by Haldimann (1998) as a philosophy of education suited to complimenting the European Council of International Schools (ECIS) accreditation process. She argued in the chapter that the ECIS accreditation process compelled international schools to create programmes for special learning needs. However, as Hayden (2006) has commented this accreditation statement refers only to those students present in the school at the time of the accreditation process and does not oblige schools to develop programmes of support to meet the needs of potential applicants or increase access.

In 2004 Haldimann (1998,) took the work on the Optimal Match Concept further with Hollington in the book 'Effective learning support in International Schools' (2004). The authors claim that they were stimulated to write the book as they found it unacceptable that international schools deny admission to students with special needs. By definition they argue that all international children have 'Special Needs' (p.9) and contend that their role as international educators is to value differences and create school environments where different needs are accommodated. The book is one of a series of books in the Effective International School Series which it is claimed are structured in a logical progression from profile to policy to practice and it is suggested as essential reading for schools unsure of the meaning of special needs and how to address them.

'What are Special Needs? What are we talking about?' is the title of the first chapter and defines the context of the book. The book aimed at international school heads is proposed as a practical guide to meeting student needs. Eight chapters deal with the identification of student needs and the development of policies and programmes to support learning. Detailed discussion takes place on the organisation of services and personnel, programme delivery and accountability, the role of the school to the parents and finally the evaluation and appraisal of both the programme and personnel. The majority of the content is based upon anecdotal evidence and the personal experiences of the authors but does confer with my own experiences of successful strategies used in an international school, albeit those constructed on the medical deficit model of student ability.

In 2000 'Count Me In! Developing Inclusive International Schools' was funded and published by the US Department of State. Edited by Kusuma-Powell and Powell (2000) the book written for the international school community, particularly on the African continent where the authors were living and practicing at the time of writing. The book comprises the writings of the editors, teachers and school leaders. In the foreword the reader is asked to rethink the place of the exceptional child as belonging both within the school and the regular classroom. The term exceptional child is used in the US to refer to students who have a statement of diagnosed educational needs, similar to that used in the UK and the book reflects US practices in developing inclusive education.

Practical in its approach, 'Count Me In' is based upon the authors' long term experiences, school practice and written by teachers and administrators for teachers and administrators. The authors propose a common framework for inclusion to promote conversations around special education, service delivery, the development of a special education common language, de-mystifying the 'special' in special education, and inclusive practical strategies for the classroom. The six chapters are driven by the proposed assumptions that all children can, do and will learn, effective teachers can teach most children, the teacher is the most important architect of a child's learning

environment, diversity enriches, strategies that define good teaching are applicable to all children and professional partnerships are more effective (and more satisfying).

In opposition to the inclusive nature of the book is the section written to inform the admission process; a flow chart depicting admission processes has a flow that culminates with the exclusion of a student. There is no argument or discussion to challenge the exclusion. Arguably this 'normalises' exclusion within the admission process and confirms the practices of many international schools. Managing admissions in this way is, according to Ball (2006) the most effective way of changing school performance which is arguably the case for many international schools.

Within the literature one applicable research study (Bradley 2000) was located. In this small-scale case study research carried out in one international school in Asia, and featured as a chapter in Hayden and Thompson (2000). Bradley (2000) detailed the difficulties and benefits of implementing inclusive education. While many international schools question if inclusion is the right thing to do Bradley (2000) was concerned with moving forward and argued not 'Is inclusion the right thing to do?' but 'How can inclusion best be implemented' (p.33).

From the literature review carried out for the study, the author identified factors that either facilitated or inhibited the process of inclusion. Her research set out to discover barriers and facilitating factors to identify possible strategies for successful implementation in her school. The facilitating factors in this study reported were; meeting a wider range of student needs, providing opportunities for students to work to their strengths and function in the real world, increased staff collaboration, catering for individual needs, working towards eradicating stigmas, raising the awareness of mainstream student achievement in specialist teachers and catering to the market needs of the community. Financial constraints, human resources and opposition from the community were reported as inhibiting factors in this school context. The author agreed that while the findings could not be generalised to other international schools it did enable her to propose a brief set of guidelines but although mentioned these guidelines were not found.

Private international schools are not obliged to engage in quality assurance however many do take on accreditation to offer assurances to their parent body and to inform school improvement (Fertig 2007). The Council of International Schools (CIS) is one of the accrediting organisations (Fertig, 2007) open to international schools and the process (Fertig, 2007) closely follows that of schools in the public sector. The process incorporates an internal review and an external review which is carried out by professional colleagues.

CIS refers to the provision of specific curricula and programmes if pupils with learning or other disabilities or remedial needs are already admitted to the school (Section E Student Support Services, Standard Two). In 2006 Hayden commented on this situation stating that there were no requirements on international schools to provide access to all students to the school and she pointed out that many schools did not consider it a necessity to make provisions for students who required learning support. This observation reflects my own professional experience.

This section has considered the research and literature that was available relating to international schools at the time of embarking on the study and provided the point of departure for this research. As I have argued the limited literature available may well be explained by a lack of engagement and experience with students (and ultimately the field) which has resulted from the practices of

restricting admission. With the advent of national contexts developing inclusive education, it is not uncommon for parents to challenge the exclusion of their child from international schooling and one would expect to see the research agenda increase as a diverse range of students take their places in international schools.

Key themes

Key themes that have emerged from this literature review and have implications for the development of learning support and inclusive provisions in international schools are:

- The lack of policy frameworks to guide schools
- The use of terminology
- The limited range of research based knowledge
- The role of admission policies and processes
- The limited number of inclusive international schools

Unlike the national context where uniform policy frameworks govern how schools are expected to operate, the international sector has no such frameworks for governing their practice or supporting the development of practice. A lack of government funding for learning support further exacerbates the schools ability to develop inclusive practices and remove barriers to learning for their students.

The terminology that has been adopted by schools and the corresponding variation in practice of how they respond to understanding and removing barriers to learning remains confused. With a limited amount of research-based knowledge to consult and a lack of international schools modelling inclusive practice, international schools leaders have very few places to seek guidance to inform practice.

A lack of governance, guidance and understanding contributes to schools that are wary of including students whose needs they do not understand or consider they are not be able to meet. Arguably, this results in the creation of admission policies that exclude international students known to have disabilities or learning difficulties at the point of admission.

The research study reviewed and the school in this study signals that there is an aspiration to develop an inclusive model of provision for international schools. However examples are rare and there is a need to carry out more research to develop the knowledge and understanding of how international schools may develop policy and practice for a range of international school contexts.

2.4 Issues and trends

The limitation of this literature review is mainly concerned with a small number of key texts, restricted to sources and perspectives from mainly one part of the world.

While much research has been carried out with regard to removing barriers to learning, little research of this nature has been carried out in international schools. The literature available to international school leaders at the time of writing was sparse, written mainly from an international educator perspective and aimed at sharing and improving practice. With little rigorous research carried out in international schools in the field of learning support and with no theoretical frameworks identified this literature review is limited. It can therefore only be considered to have

brought together the 'guiding interests, sensitising concepts, and disciplinary perspectives' (Charmaz 2006) that provided the point of departure for the enquiry.

A further limiting factor of the literature review was its dependence on a UK perspective and this was highlighted during data collection when I discovered the practice of collaborative teaching. Collaborative teaching is a strategy commonly deployed in the US to increase access to learning. Not addressed in this chapter, collaborative teaching is dealt with in chapter five when the findings are discussed.

Despite the limitations referred to above, this is one of very few projects that have considered barriers to learning and implications for international school development. In this context it could be considered important in that it is adding to the existing small research base with the overall aim of improving practice.

In Chapter Three I will present the school context for this study, the research aim and questions, and describe the research approach and methodology. Given the limited nature of the available theoretical frameworks, I made use of a grounded theory approach to build data.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

This enquiry sought to identify the climate and conditions in an international school that claimed to include, challenge and support success in all of its students. The international school studied was a fee paying school set in a major European capital city.

The previous chapter considered the literature; the guiding interests, the sensitising concepts and disciplinary perspectives (Charmaz, 2006) which provided the starting point for this enquiry. In this chapter I will share the research aim and questions, describe the research strategy, methodology and design before concluding the chapter with the ethical considerations of the enquiry.

3.1 Research Aim and Questions

The research aimed to identify the climate and the conditions present in an international school that claimed to be inclusive by looking at how it had removed barriers to learning for three students in its primary school. Three levels of support were offered at the school; mild, moderate and intensive. A case study design was employed because in conjunction to developing a better understanding of 'a real-life phenomenon in depth' (Yin, 2009, p.18), case studies also acknowledge and describe the contextual conditions. The following four research questions guided the data collection:

What are the barriers to learning?

Has the school removed the barriers to learning? If so how?

How does the school know that the barriers have been removed?

Where barriers remain what are the implications for further school development?

3.2 Ethics

As this study was to include and give voice to primary age school children, ethical aspects of working with children shaped the research design and therefore I start with this discussion.

As this study was a 'contemporary phenomenon in its real life context' (Yin, 2009, p.73) it acknowledged that care and sensitivity was required. Furthermore attention to these aspects was considered crucial as this study involved interviews with three students in the elementary school. Care and sensitivity were ensured by upholding confidentiality, by gaining informed consent, by ensuring that participants understood the purpose of the study see Appendix 2, by eliminating the possibility that any of the subjects could come to harm or be deceived. Ensuring that appropriate amounts of care and sensitivity were maintained throughout the study, privacy and confidentiality were protected and special precautions with regard to student contact, in line with school policies and the wishes of students and their parents (Yin, 2009) was adhered to.

In the revised ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (BERA) the principles underpinning the guidelines states that

'The Association considers that all educational research should be conducted with an ethic of respect for: the person, knowledge, democratic values, the quality of educational research, and academic freedom'. (p.5)

BERA (2004) also reminds us that 'researchers must comply with the legal requirements in relation to the storage and use of personal data as set down by the Data Protection Act (1998)' (2004 p.9).

Informed consent (see Appendix 2) was gathered from the school and all persons involved in the study. The school was provided with a letter see Appendix 2 that outlined the project and requested informed consent. The letter was aimed at increasing the understanding of the study and how the privacy and confidentiality of the subjects throughout the enquiry would be protected. This letter was distributed to the participants by the head of LS and collected in during the data collection visits. Parents were given my contact details and the interviews were arranged before the data collection visit. Two of the students signed letters of informed consent and the parent of the student receiving intensive levels of Learning support (LS) signed the form for her.

In line with Porter and Lacey (2005) I acknowledged that in conjunction with informed consent, informed dissent is important when working with children. According to Porter and Lacey (2005) through listening to 'explicit communication of assent' (p.93) in addition to 'signs that the person is dissenting' (p.93) researchers build in opportunities of informed dissent. Observations in addition to the interview where planned for the student receiving intensive level of support. It was recognised that it was likely that she would not want to respond to interview questions but would enjoy the opportunity to spend time with me. I recognised that she may have chosen not to interact with me and this would have been respected. However, in line with the thoughts of her mother and teacher she did indeed answer my questions in her own way and in her own time. In this study the students were given the opportunity to informed dissent.

In conjunction to explaining that interviews and participation could be stopped at any point it was also explained that all information would remain confidential and all names would be removed from any documents collected. I also clarified that their 'information' would not be shared or discussed with any third party including teachers or parents.

3.3 A Qualitative Research Strategy

As there had been little research carried out on inclusion in international schools, a qualitative approach to 'discover understanding or to achieve explanation from the data instead of from prior knowledge or theory' (Richards and Morse, 2007, p.2) was sought. This approach is contained in the paradigm of qualitative, naturalistic and ethnographic research. According to LeCompte and Preissle (2007), these approaches are

'concerned more with description rather than prediction, induction rather than deduction, generation rather than verification of theory, construction rather than enumeration, and subjectivities rather than objective knowledge' (2007 p. 139).

The case study strategy in this case sought data from school documentation, interviews and described observed events. In recognising the agency of the researcher I acknowledge that data is made, it does not pre-exist and is not merely collected (Richards and Morse, 2007). Codes, categories and themes were then constructed to assist in understanding the data (Charmaz, 2006). The use of case study and grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) approaches together supported the development of an emerging theory.

The need for case studies, according to Yin (2009) results from a wish to comprehend the 'how or why' (p.2) of social events when behaviours cannot be controlled. In case study research data is collected in natural settings and involves interviews with, and the observation of key people. Yin (2009) has described three types of case studies; exploratory, descriptive or explanatory and this design is of a descriptive nature as it sets out to explain what is happening.

At the time of beginning the enquiry there were few international schools who were modeling or showing a commitment to inclusive schooling. The school was selected because of its claimed inclusive nature (articulated in its mission statement) and the work carried out within the international school field to promote inclusion. The study involved one school and three students within the school and the design is described by Yin (2009) as a single case study with an embedded design where the students represent the three units of analysis.

As I had no previous relationship with the school the learning support director selected the students for the study. It was felt by the school that the students selected would reflect the ways in which the school removed barriers to learning and the challenges to the organization that barrier removal posed. One student, from each level of support (mild, moderate and intensive), of the same age agreed to participate along with their parents.

If the findings were to be robust then multiple and converging lines of evidence in conjunction with alternative explanations were to be sought and case study data was collected from interviews (open ended conversations), observations, meetings and school produced documentation.

A lack of trust in the credibility of a case study researcher's procedures and the inability to protect against biases are considered to be limitations to the case study design. Systematic procedures to address construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability (Yin 2009) were put into place to counteract these limitations as suggested by Yin (2009). These procedures are described below in section 3.7 on Validity, Reliability and Quality. Case study protocol questions (Yin 2009) were developed to help ensure that the focus of the enquiry was maintained during data collection.

Giving voice to research participants is a central principle of constructivist grounded theory (Breckenridge, Jones, Elliott & Nicol, 2012) and to help identify the climate and conditions in the school I was eager to incorporate the voices, the views and experiences of the school community. A constructivist approach to grounded theory is located within the interpretivist tradition and the data and analysis are considered social constructions which reflect the role of the participants and the researcher. I understand the enquiry to be influenced by the social context of the school and its community and I acknowledge that how I was perceived as the researcher by the interview participants will have influenced how they shared their experiences with me. Further I acknowledge that interpretation of the data will be socially constructed and affected by my personal experience, views and values (Charmaz and Bryant, 2011, p.293). My epistemological position then is that as the researcher I consider myself to be subjective and located inside the enquiry and that this enquiry was situated in the context, place and time of the data collection.

The choice of constructivist grounded theory was influenced by the ontological and epistemological arguments made by Charmaz (2003, cited in Breckenridge, Jones, Elliot and Nicol, 2012), which reflected my own position. Charmaz claims that constructivist grounded theory 'assumes the

relativism of multiple social realities, recognises the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and viewed, and aims toward an interpretive understanding of subjects' meanings' (p.2).

The constructivist version of grounded theory has been developed by Charmaz from the original work of Glaser and Strauss published in 1967 (Charmaz and Bryant, 2011). Glaser and Strauss continued to develop the work but worked apart and Glaser's work became known as 'the classic grounded theory'. Strauss continued to develop the theory and worked with Corbin, their work is referred to as 'the reformulated grounded theory' (Hallberg, 2006). 'Classic grounded theory' is described (Hallberg, 2006) as being close to traditional positivism with an interactionist perspective, 'reformulated grounded theory' acknowledges participant voice and has moved towards post-positivism. The 'constructivist grounded theory' developed by Charmaz and used in this study lies in the interpretive tradition. Hallberg (2006) considers 'constructivist grounded theory' as an approach that lies between positivism and postmodernism (p.147).

This grounded theory strategy then sought data, made data, described observed events, answered questions about what was happening and developed theoretical categories to understand it (Charmaz, 2006, p.25).

3.4 The Research Design

Traditional research design uses already established theory as a framework however when there have been no suitable theoretical frameworks to draw upon, as in this study 'guiding interests, sensitising concepts, and disciplinary perspectives' (Charmaz, 2006, p.17) provide the point of departure. As discussed in the previous section, a constructivist approach to grounded theory was adopted and the data collected was understood to be situated in the context, place and time of the data collection (Charmaz, 2006).

Case study research according to Yin (2009) offers the opportunity of carrying out observations. The option to supplement interviews with observations was considered an important feature as it allowed the design to take into account the participation of students with communication challenges. Observational data involved making direct observations in the school. It involved focusing on the actions and interactions of students, parents and staff, and the physical environment. This observational data led to the creation of narrative which informed the findings. The presentation of the findings involved endeavouring to be as neutral and factual as possible while recording observational data (see appendix 5).

According to Charmaz (2006), intensive qualitative interviews permit in-depth explorations of topics and are particularly suited to grounded theory research. The design acknowledges that an interview is contextual and negotiated, that reality is constructed or reconstructed and results reflect what the interviewer and interviewee bring to the table. In addition it was understood that the content of interviews could be affected by age, gender, race, power relations, and professional status (Charmaz, 2006). The interviews were designed to be 'open-ended yet directed, shaped yet emergent and paced yet unrestricted' (Charmaz, 2006, p.28) to facilitate clarification and to follow up on new lines of research. Interviews were chosen that so that their pace and structure could be matched to the age and needs of the interviewee and where necessary supplemented by observations to augment data collection.

To consider to what extent barriers to learning had been removed I considered it important to listen to the voices of students and their parents in the research process. As access to the school was limited, I requested the participation of one student in each level of elementary schools LS provision; mild moderate and intensive and their parent(s) and teachers. The school approached the students and parents to discuss research and their participation. In order to maximise the interview process the head of LS suggested that my attendance at the summer term, child study meetings would maximise my access to teachers and support staff and allow me to witness learning focused discussions on each of the three students.

The process of the studied phenomenon rather than a description of it were sought. The research process as described by Balarin (2009) was an ongoing conversation between myself the researcher and the available theoretical resources. As the 'quality-and credibility' (Charmaz, 2006, p.18) of a grounded theory study depends upon the collection of rich, significant and pertinent data I used a set of reflective quality questions (see page 38) proposed by (Charmaz 2006) to support data collection in line with case study research methods. Multiple sources of evidence in the form of interviews, observations and documentation to support the validity of the research were collected as suggested by Yin (2009). An enquiry protocol and protocol questions see Appendix 3 were developed to help increase the reliability of the data collection process (Yin, 2009). The enquiry protocol and its questions were designed to maintain the focus on the aims of the enquiry during the research process and especially critical during data collection as there was limited access to the school. Both the quality questions and the protocol questions are discussed in section 3.7.

3.5 Data Collection

In line with the constant comparative approach of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006) I had originally planned to carry out multiple rounds of interviews in the spring and summer term of 2011. However, due to timetabling constraints this plan was revised and data collection took place in two stages but with only one round of interviews which eventually took place during the summer term. In March 2011 I attended a three day professional conversation for international school leaders to develop my understanding of the school context and their approaches to inclusion. In May 2011 I spent four days in school collecting data from interviews, multidisciplinary child study meetings and observations. To some degree the lack of multiple rounds of interviews were compensated for by returning the interview transcripts to the interviewees for clarification however a limitation to the study remains as the constant comparative approach to data collection and analysis was compromised.

The data collected from the two visits consisted of interviews, observations and documentation (see Appendix 4). During the visits, field notes were kept to record information, thoughts and questions to be clarified or followed up. These field notes were used during the data collection and at the time of analysis for clarification into the situational and social context of the data collected. Crucial to the enquiry was the first visit which involved attending the three day conference and which highlighted gaps in my knowledge.

The first visit

The school was involved in cycles of 'professional conversations' with a group of international educators and I was invited to commence the enquiry by attending the conversation entitled 'The Next Frontier: Inclusion'. Taking place over a three day period in March 2011 the conversation was

attended by around 10 international school leaders and their support staff with the goal to create inclusive international schools in every major city of the world. The conversations were guided by three questions: Who is international education for? What does inclusion look like? What is my role?

The purpose and structures of the learning experiences were focused on the definition of managed inclusion, defining and creating a common language, empowering individuals to effect change, examining how effective change happens in schools, and providing practical and logistical support and information to schools wishing to become more inclusive.

The conference facilitated discussions with key members of staff, encouraged discussion between participants, and interactive activities served to advance understanding around the essential questions. Participants had the chance to visit classrooms, meet the students and pose questions to a panel of high school students.

After the three day conference visit the field notes were typed up and a first initial coding exercise identified themes and common understandings to enhance knowledge of the school context before the data collection visit. This initial enquiry process led to a period of further research into teaching strategies and vocabulary that were typically North American and with which I was unfamiliar.

The second visit

The second visit was the main data collection opportunity; my approach was focused by the previous information-gathering visit. I was able to gain a more in-depth, 'rich' picture of the school conditions by using individual, targeted observations, interviews and attending multi-disciplinary child study meetings. During the four days I refined initial timetables and took the opportunity to meet and observe as many people and situations that would give me more background to the school context. I was made to feel extremely welcome and was given working space in the staffroom and the LS classroom when available. I was left to organise my own time and speak to as many people as I wished.

As previously discussed case study research protocol questions were formulated to guide the second data collection visit see Appendix 3.

Interviews

Interviews were carried out with each student, their parents, the senior management team (head of school, head of the elementary school, and head of LS), the elementary LS head, and the special education teacher.

The interview questions see Appendix 1 were based upon suggestions put forward by Charmaz (2006) to compile a well-thought out list of open-ended questions based upon 'initial open-end questions', 'intermediate questions', and 'ending questions'. Overlapping questions were introduced to provide the opportunity to retrace earlier threads.

Interviews were recorded in accordance with the consent of the participants. Recording the interview allowed me to give full attention to the interviewee and the interview process and concentrate on clarifying responses and following up on information provided. The context, participants' reactions and any other relevant information was noted in the field work journal. These journal notes were consulted during the analysis to clarify emerging themes and to further develop an understanding of the climate and conditions in the school. The interviews were typed up

word-for-word, and the interview transcriptions were sent to the interviewees to corroborate the evidence collected.

Multidisciplinary child study meetings

At the mild and moderate level of support the child study meetings were attended by the head of LS, the class teacher, the co-teacher if the student was co-taught, and the English Language Development (ELD) teacher if the student attended ELD classes and any therapists that were involved with student learning. In the special education child study meeting the special education class teacher managed the meeting and the educators involved in student learning were invited to the meeting.

The purpose of the child study meetings for the students receiving mild and moderate support were to discuss and reflect upon student learning with particular emphasis on the transition to secondary school. Questions similar to the enquiry questions were posed by the child study manager who led the meeting and these questions included 'What have been some of the barriers to learning, and how have they been removed?', 'How do we know barriers have been removed and what needs to be done to effectuate further progress in learning?' Both students would be transferring to middle school, one on campus, and one returning to his home country.

The child study meeting for the student attending the special education class had been designed to discuss how best to prepare her for the class visit to Trier so that she could participate alongside her homeroom peers. As the student had already visited Trier it was decided that she could prepare a photo presentation to her homeroom peers to share her knowledge of the city before the trip. The speech and language therapist (S<) would accompany the student on the trip and support the preparation of the presentation but would not be attending the presentation.

Observations

Observations were carried out to serve two functions. In the first case the observation supplemented the interview that had been carried out with the student in the intensive level of the programme. The special education teacher had correctly identified that an interview would not elicit enough information as to how the school had removed barriers to her learning. Time was spent with her in the special education classroom, in the homeroom, the art class, choir and occupational therapy.

The second function was to observe the students receiving mild and moderate levels of support in the co-taught classrooms to gain a better understanding of how the school organised its approaches to collaborative teaching (co-teaching) (Murawski, 2010). Collaborative teaching was not a practice that I was familiar with and therefore not mentioned in the literature review. The practice came to my notice during the first data collection visit and therefore is introduced and discussed in the findings chapter.

Observations were recorded on observation templates see Appendix 5 to help to ensure that the purpose and aims of the study remained the focus of the observation.

Documentation

The school documentation collected fell into two categories; school wide information and student learning information.

School produced documents collected and analysed:

- 'An introduction to the Elementary School'.
- 'Learning Support at ISX'.

Student documents collected:

- Student ILPs (Individual Learning Plans).

According to the head of LS certain sections of the LS handbook were under review and so it was not felt to be reliable enough to contribute to the research.

3.6 Data Analysis

According to Yin (2009) data analysis 'consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing or otherwise recombining evidence, to draw empirically based conclusions' (p.126). The process of data analysis followed that of analytical induction (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). In analytical induction initial codes are generated from the data, relationships between the data are sought and working themes are derived from the data. Negative cases are sought to enable the modification, enlargement or restriction of the original theory.

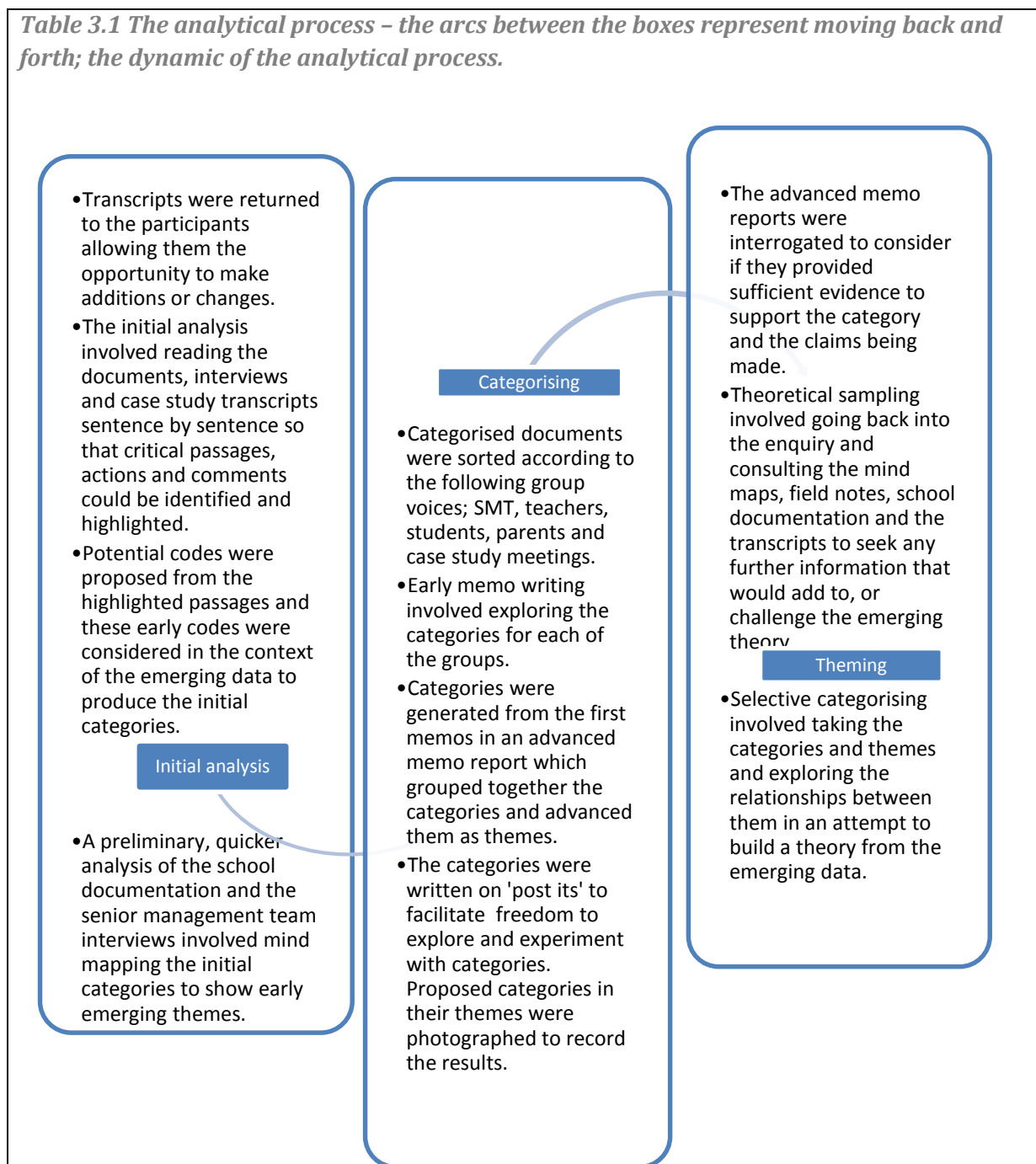
As previously discussed I employed a constructivist approach to grounded theory recognising that the data, its collection and analysis was not free from 'temporal, spatial, social and situational conditions' (Charmaz and Bryant, 2011, p.298). Further, I recognised that any emerging theory could not be divorced from the external world and was influenced by me as the interpreter of the collected data and constructor of any eventual theory. This is in accord with Yin's view of how case study contributes to our knowledge of a phenomenon by (p 38) 'analytic generalisation' where case study results generalise to theory, not to populations (as per statistical generalisation).

In accordance with arguments posed by Charmaz (2006) preconceived theoretical concepts may offer a place to start examining data but it should not be assumed that they offer automatic codes for the analysis of data. I attempted to ensure that preconceptions earned their place in this enquiry through interrogation to verify that the developing ideas supported the interpretation of the emerging data. However, I do acknowledge that as a novice researcher I am not sure this was fully achieved. The interrogative questions used were: Is this data explained by these concepts? Can they be explained without the concepts? What do the concepts add?

The analytical process

The analytical process (Table 3.1) described below represents the research process which involved moving back and forward between the written word, mind maps, codes and the data generated.

Table 3.1 The analytical process – the arcs between the boxes represent moving back and forth; the dynamic of the analytical process.

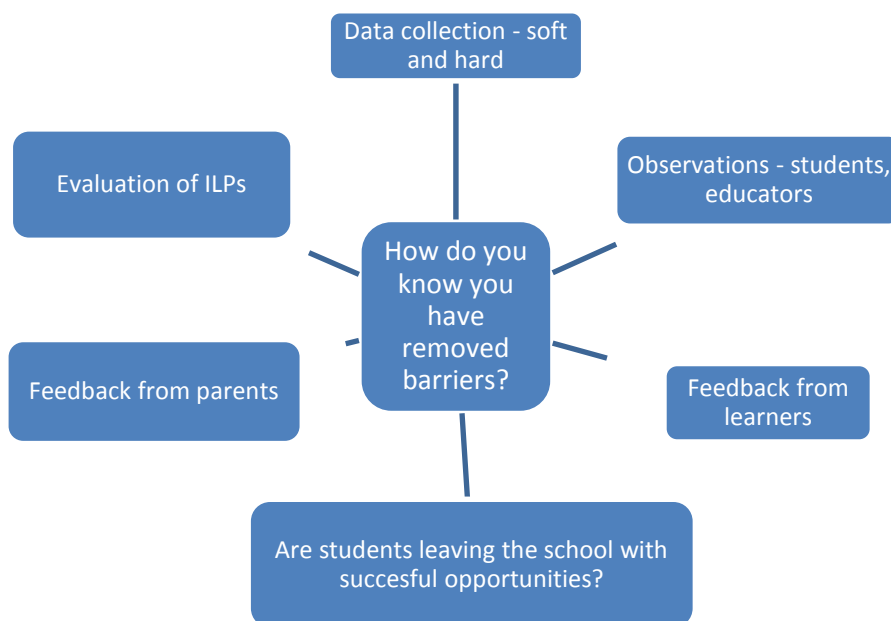


Theoretical sufficiency (Dey 1999, cited by Charmaz 2006, p.114) as opposed to theoretical saturation was considered to have been achieved when no new data was seen to be emerging from the analysis. I have used the term theoretical sufficiency as opposed to theoretical saturation in line with arguments put forward by Dey (1999, cited by Charmaz 2006, p.114) that not all data is coded in a grounded theory analysis.

Mind maps

I created simple hand sketched mind maps at various stages throughout the study to help me organise and clarify my thoughts. Mind mapping enabled me to gather large amounts of data and create a visual overview of the findings as they emerged, supported the identification of connections between isolated data and allowed me to group and regroup codes and themes (Buzan, 2005).

Table 3.2: An example of how mind maps were used to collate answers to the research questions.



By providing easy, visual access to a large amount of data the mind maps facilitated the analysis at the theoretical sampling stage when the emerging theory was challenged.

Coding

Coding according to Charmaz (2006) generates the bones of the analysis; it is the link between the collected data and developing the emergent theory. The fragments of data are taken apart, are named in concise terms and an analytical handle is given to support the development of abstract ideas. Careful sentence by sentence coding was carried out as proposed by Charmaz (2006) in an attempt to alleviate the inclusion of personal motives, fears and presuppositions and fulfil the grounded theory criteria of fit and relevance (p.54).

To help ensure that the focus remained on the aims of the study during the coding process the following questions recommended by Charmaz (2006) were used:

- What is this data a study of?
- What does the data suggest? Pronounce?
- From whose point of view?

- What theoretical category does this specific datum indicate? (Charmaz, 2006, p.47)

The following table (3.4) illustrates the process of developing initial codes into categories and themes. The initial codes were generated from the two student interviews and the observation of the student receiving intensive levels of support (the short interview with the student was supplemented with observation time as previously discussed).

Table 3.3: An example of how initial codes from two student interviews were developed into categories and themes.

Initial codes	Categories	Themes
Combining classroom strategies and occupational therapy strategies. High expectations. Caring climate. Multi-agency support. Effective use of resources. Independence. Belonging. Assistive technologies. Positive cognitive interventions. Positive classroom environment. Self-advocacy. Metacognition. Understand students. Welcoming. Teach you to ask questions. Resilience. Understanding own learning outcomes. Peer learning support.	Teaching strategies. Metacognition. Learning climate. Learning feedback. Resources. Understanding students. Developing independence.	Teaching for learning. Learning about learning. Assessment for learning. Climate for learning. Resources for learning.

Memos

I wrote memos which were informal analytical notes throughout the study to record reflections, findings and ideas as the analysis proceeded. As described by Charmaz (2006) the memos characterised the discovery phase and led into theoretical sampling. The initial memos were written quickly, addressed to myself and not edited so as to imitate my natural voice as proposed by Charmaz (2006). Successive memo writing helped sustain my continued involvement, encouraged me to explore and experiment with the categories, promoted continued reflection on new ideas and insights while making progressive comparisons and abstractions.

Memo report writing contributed to the development of the initial codes into categories and finally into themes so that they could be clarified and the relationships between them could be explored. This analytical process was one of moving between data and emerging themes and re-categorising until the themes and final categories seemed static.

Advanced memo writing involved a constant comparison of the data being generated from the different participants as it developed from codes into categories and finally themes. Decisions were made about where themes should go and how the themes and categories fitted together and the relationships between them.

Theoretical sampling, theoretical sufficiency and sorting

In accordance with Charmaz (2006) theoretical sampling led on from memo writing and was designed to be 'strategic, specific and systematic' (p.103). Theoretical sampling involved seeking pertinent data to develop the emergent theory and supported the elaboration and refinement of the categories. In this study the process involved going back into the mind maps, field notes, school documentation and the transcripts to seek further data that may have added to, or challenged the emergent theory. Whereas memo writing had helped to identify incomplete categories and gaps in analysis, theoretical sampling helped to ensure the construction of full and robust categories and identify the relationships between them. Theoretical sufficiency (Dey 1999, cited by Charmaz 2006, p.114) as previously discussed was felt to have been achieved when no new theoretical insights emerged from the data.

Sorting the memos helped to organise the analysis, refined theoretical links and allowed comparisons between codes and themes to be made (Charmaz, 2006). In this case memos were sorted by the title of each theme, themes were compared and memos were then ordered to help create a balance between the researched events, the themes and the theoretical assertions.

3.7 Validity, Reliability and Quality

While I have argued that this case study is not generalizable it is important however that validity, reliability and quality are addressed. According to Yin (2009) the following four tests (p.40) are frequently used to determine the quality of case study and social science research; construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability. Each of these tests as described by Yin (2009) was considered during the case study and I shall discuss each one with reference to this enquiry.

Construct validity occurs at the time of data collection and composition and involves identifying correct operational measures for the study (Yin, 2009). In this case I collected multiple sources of evidence to enable converging lines of enquiry to develop (Yin, 2009). A chain of evidence in the form of annotated, themed and categorised documentation was maintained to maximise and enhance data collection and finally the initial findings and emerging theory were returned to the school head for review. The head of school however, did not reply to my request to review the findings and I consider this to be a limitation to the construct validity of the study. Arguably this lack of response could also be taken to be an acceptance of the results as I would have expected a quick response if the results had been found to be unacceptable.

Internal validity takes places during data analysis and involves pattern matching, explanation building, attending to competing theories and using logic models (Yin, 2009). In this case internal

validity was addressed through pattern matching and explanation building. With no competing theories to address or theoretical predicted events that could be compared to the observed events of this study logic models were not used.

External validity is attended to at the research design phase (Yin, 2009) and is important in studies where one is producing results that are generalizable. As this case study was situated in the context, place and time of the data collection (Charmaz, 2006) it is not expected that the findings could be generalised to other international schools for the reasons previously discussed. However in accordance with Yin's view this case study could contribute to the knowledge of the phenomenon of international schooling. If this study was to be repeated to test if the proposed theory was generalizable across international schools then the question of external validity and replication logic would have to be attended to.

Reliability is attended to during data collection and according to Yin (2009) involves the strategies of developing case study protocols and databases so that errors and biases (p.54) are minimised. Reliability was attended to through the development of an enquiry protocol and a set of enquiry protocol questions as suggested by Yin (2009) to reduce both inaccuracies and prejudices. Reliability is commonly thought of in terms of arriving at the same conclusions if the same study was run again however as previously discussed this is not applicable to this study. This study would have been strengthened by the use of a database. While all of the materials have been stored and are traceable an organised database such as NVivo; a set of tools that assist in the analysis of qualitative data would have increased the reliability of the study by providing more efficient and reliable ways of managing, comparing and contrasting, and querying (Bazeley, 2007) data. The NVivo computer software according to Bazeley (2007) allows the researcher to harness the computer's 'capacity for recording, sorting, matching, and linking' (p.2).

Quality questions to support data collection

Two sets of questions were developed to facilitate the reliability and quality of the study.

The following case study protocol questions according to Yin (2009) were developed to help ensure that the focus of the enquiry was maintained during data collection:

- What is it about the school that enables it to include a wide range of pupils?
- Why does the school do it in this way?
- What are examples of what the school does to include a wide range of pupils?
- On the basis of my visit is there evidence that the school is inclusive?
- What is the range, are there limitations?
- Have I identified the climate and conditions?

The following set of reflective questions as proposed by Charmaz (2006) was developed to support the collection of credible rich, significant and pertinent data:

- Have I collected enough background data about persons, processes, and settings to have ready recall and to understand and portray the full range of contexts of the study?
- Have I gained detailed descriptions of a range of participants' views and actions?
- Does the data reveal what lies beneath the surface?
- Have I gained multiple views of the participants' range of actions?

- Have I gathered data that enable me to develop analytical categories?
- What kinds of comparisons can I make between data? How do these comparisons generate and inform my ideas?

(p.18)

The use of the quality questions during my first visit drew my attention to the use of collaborative teaching where two fully qualified teachers work together and share full responsibility for teaching and assessment, planning and organisation. Work between the first and second data collection visit used the quality questions to focus on updating my knowledge, planning the second visit to answer remaining questions, clarify understandings and update interview vocabulary. Attention to these quality questions during the first visit alerted me to an omission of an area of the school that I had not considered during the planning stage; the library. The investigation then was extended into the library as it was recognised that it could provide a rich source of data.

With only four days for the main data collection visit the quality questions were crucial in keeping me focused and ensuring that I was covering all ground and preparing further meetings, visits or observations before the school day finished.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has considered the context for the research, ethical considerations, shared the research aim and questions, considered the research design and described the operational aspects of the enquiry, the data collection and analysis. In the next chapter the data collection experience will be described and discussed and we will look in greater depth at the school, meet the students, the parents and the key players in the school.

CHAPTER 4: IN THE FIELD – DATA COLLECTION

As previously discussed there is no common understanding or description of what an international school may look like and so in this chapter we will take a closer look at this school, meet the students, their parents and those who teach them. I will also describe the data collection process.

Introduction

The international school where this research took place is in a major European capital city. According to the school literature at the time of data collection it enrolled between 1,500 and 1,900 pupils across its four school (early childhood centre, elementary, middle and high) campus and was founded in the 1950s. With its roots in the American tradition it has evolved into an international school with an international ethos. It attracts pupils from over 50 countries and approximately 80% of the pupils are expatriate families temporarily resident in the city. The school meets the needs of international organisations and embassies who are dependent upon international schools to provide an education to their employees' children in a language of instruction that allows them to move their employees around the world when and wherever needed. The school does not receive any government funding and is a fee paying school. School fees were comparable to the other international schools in the city and the majority of school fees would have been included in the employment package negotiated at the time of employment by the parents. Extra funds incurred for individual therapies or LS would usually have been covered by the medical insurances also offered as part of the employment package.

The mission statement informed me that the school offered 'a challenging, inclusive international education designed to give every student opportunities for success within and beyond our school'. According to its literature 'Education is provided by teams of outstanding, well-resourced teachers, working in world-class learning environments in a safe, secure campus' and the school experience is 'shaped by a spirit of community, characterised by students, parents, faculty and staff working together to achieve our goal of developing independent learners and international citizens'.

Each school division; The High School, The Middle School, The Elementary School and the Early Childhood Centre had its own LS team each lead by a divisional head of LS who reported to the head of LS who then coordinated the school-wide programme. The head of LS was a member of the SMT alongside the heads of the four school divisions, who all reported to the head of school.

Learning support was provided for students in three bands of need: mild, moderate and intensive. Extra school fees were charged for those students who needed intensive levels of support. An Individualised Learning Plan (ILP) was written for each student and this described school history, learning profile, and the annual educational goals. Accommodations and/or modifications were formally identified through the ILP.

Learning was supported through a conceptually based curriculum aimed at challenging all learners through teaching to the top and scaffolding through differentiated approaches.

Data collection had been planned to take place during spring 2011 with the possibility of a second round of interviews if the data collected was found to be insufficient. Interview dates in the school calendar were not found in the spring term and interviews were instead planned for May however, I was also invited to join a three day inclusion conference at the school in March to fully prepare me for the interview sessions. In May 2011 I spent four days in school collecting data from interviews,

child study meetings and observations. While there would be no possibility for a second round of interviews, limitations to the enquiry were partly allayed by returning the interview transcripts to the interviewees for corrections and amendments before analysis. During the March conference the school showcased its model of inclusion and this prepared me for the data collection visit which followed two months later.

During the visits, field notes were kept to record information, thoughts and questions to be clarified or followed up. These field notes were used during the data collection and at the time of analysis for clarification into the situational and social context of the data collected.

4.1 Preparing To Collect Data

A letter was sent to the school to request the possibility of carrying out the research in the school during the school year 2010/11.

The interview questions and the use of the tape recorder were piloted with a teacher, a student diagnosed with high functioning Asperger's Syndrome and his parent. Two essential changes resulted from the pilot; a question in the parent questionnaire was rephrased to make it less intrusive so that a simple 'no' could suffice – 'Do you think that this affects her/him at home?' Two questions were added to the student interview to take into account a fuller range of learning; 'Is learning sometimes too easy for you?', 'What happens when school work is too easy?'

The pilot reminded me of how difficult it can be, during the interview to adapt questions to follow the thread of the interview and at the same time make sure that leading questions do not influence the answers. I was mindful of these two aspects during the interviews.

A first meeting planned with the head of LS to discuss the enquiry details did not take place due to sickness and instead I discussed the project with the head of school. He received my paperwork which explained and described the research project see Appendix 2. The meeting with the head of LS and the elementary head of LS took place in February 2011.

The aims of the meeting with the heads of LS were to familiarise myself with the campus, collect school information, select the students and arrange interview, observation and child study meeting dates. Inclusion in the context of this school, its organisation and my research needs were fully discussed at this meeting. Alongside interviews I was invited to attend the child study meetings which would increase my access to teachers and specialists, facilitate my understandings of student learning profiles and allow me to observe the collaborative nature of removing barriers to learning. Three possible students had been identified; one in each level of support. It was felt that these students would provide a good picture of the successes and challenges that the school and the students faced and it was thought that the parents would be in agreement. The school contacted the parents, passed on my letter of introduction see Appendix 2. To enhance my understanding of the school and its vision on inclusion I was invited to attend a three day conference entitled 'The Next Frontier: Inclusion' to be held in the school. This was for international school leaders and would take the form of a professional learning conversation.

Interviews times with parents were arranged. The head of LS organised the interview times with the students with mild and moderate levels of support and their child study meetings, along with observation times. For the student receiving intensive levels of support it was suggested that I spend

as much time as possible with the student as it was acknowledged that she would be difficult to interview.

4.2 Acquainting myself with the school – A Three Day Learning Conversation

The three day conference had been designed to encourage discussion and reflection on inclusion through interactive activities. This conference also facilitated my understanding of the school and gave me opportunities to visit elementary school classrooms, talk to students, observe collaborative teaching, and participate in a high school question and answer session in advance of the data collection visit. Further activities included informative discussions with a member of the human resource team and the marketing manager.

The marketing manager reported that the inclusive nature of the school had become a selling point of the school; 'it is integral to the marketing story'. A coherent story backed up by data, we were told allows parents and the admission's department to market the school. The financial manager was articulate in his understanding of the models of service delivery for an inclusive student population, reporting that the richest environment is the mainstream classroom.

Members of the human resources department reported that they were involved in the recruitment of experienced staff and subsequent training of teachers to increase the skills and understanding in inclusive practices. Adaptability and flexibility, it was explained were expected for all staff and crucial for the teaching faculty as staff were deployed where needed. Contracts were not extended if the skills and belief in inclusion were not present; nevertheless, the average stay of a teacher was nine years which was considered high for an international school. Detailed job descriptions were provided and mentoring during the first year was carried out. Fidelity to the school's core mission and identity was a necessity as educators were expected to live it out in practice; understanding that there was no fixed right way of teaching. The board further enhanced inclusive school development by offering long term contracts to the heads of school.

The attendance at the three day learning conversation turned out to be crucial to my understanding of inclusion in this context, a context where inclusive teaching and learning approaches, terminology and strategies had been taken from the North American State system. Further research into unfamiliar approaches and language usage enabled me to increase my understanding before the data collection visit. Interview questions were further developed ensuring that they were both appropriate and understandable by the interviewees.

4.3 Data Collection

Data collection took place on four days (3, 4, 5, and 6) in May 2011. During this time I collected and made data from interviews, child study meetings and observations.

The Learning Support (LS) department

Members of the LS department were present in each school division; early childhood centre, elementary, middle and high school. LS in the elementary school provided support in three bands: mild, moderate and intensive and was fully described in the school brochure, 'Learning Support at ISX'.

Mild support was provided through a consultative process between the student's home room teacher and the LS department to monitor student learning, arrange learning accommodations and small group or in class support.

Moderate support was provided through combinations of collaborative teaching, small group support, appropriate therapies and assistive technologies. Curricular modifications; changes made to the learning objectives were carried out if required.

Intensive support was offered in the special education classroom (one in each school division), a self-contained unit with an inclusive component. Student learning was supported by a team of specialised professionals working with the teachers and geared to the learning needs of the student. The students also belonged to a home room in the school which corresponded to their chronological age. A full range of therapies were offered plus functional life skills, social skills, adaptive or assistive technologies, adaptive music and physical education (PE), therapeutic horse riding and the students had the possibility of participating in the National Special Olympics Team. The Special Olympics offer worldwide Olympic sporting opportunities for those with intellectual disabilities.

An ILP was written for each student and this described the student's educational background, learning profile, and the annual educational goals. This document was discussed at the teacher/parent/student meeting to facilitate consistent approaches and a common direction. Accommodations or modifications were formally identified through the ILP.

The set-up of the special education unit with its main classroom, equipped sensory and activity space, bathroom and an office/quiet teaching room was laid out and equipped to accommodate a range of physical, sensory and emotional needs. The teacher explained that the spaces and rooms were used as needed to meet the fluctuating sensory and physical needs of the students.

The students

As an outsider I was dependent upon the LS department to provide me with access to the students and find students that would facilitate the enquiry questions. I had requested that students should be chosen to highlight cases of both success and challenge in terms of removing barriers to learning. Consent forms see Appendix 2 which included my email address and short biography were given out by the school staff and the forms were then collected at the time of the interview. Two sets of parents replied to me directly via email, to schedule the interviews, one parent interview was arranged during the visit. Information about the students was gathered from the ILP, the interviews (parents and the students) and child study meetings.

The students in school

As discussed in the previous chapter three students were the focus of this study; an 11 year old student in each level of support (mild, moderate and intensive).

Student A

In line with her complex medical history, Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder and Autism diagnosis Anastasia was supported in the special education unit and received intensive levels of support. Anastasia was absent from school one day per week to attend hospital as she required physiological interventions to alleviate chronic lung disease. Her biggest barrier according to her teacher was her inability to communicate at a level that allowed her to fully partake in a social life as

she neither understood social cues or the necessity of them. Anastasia's difficulties; a lack of concentration, distractibility and fixations were pervasive across her whole life. Unable to decode or retain numbers or words beyond 3-4 letters or digits she was dependent upon her ability to read sight words that she had been taught and which therefore affected her ability to read independently.

Removing barriers for Anastasia were considered to lie in setting realistic goals to expand knowledge and life skills that were attainable and useful and would serve her in the future. She was rewarded with age-appropriate rewards that would lead to the development of a functional skill, such as independently making a purchase at the high school cafeteria on the days when her mother was volunteering.

Her strengths according to her teacher and mother were seen in her openness and ability to make contact with others and her excitement for everything around her. Despite Anastasia's ability to make contact with those around her, she had great difficulty in communicating beyond the basic interactions and found it difficult to develop her thoughts or sustain conversations enough to make relationships meaningful. In the initial stages of the interview Anastasia answered questions about what she was doing, what she liked and who her friends were however, she quickly lost interest and it was difficult to know if she couldn't answer or didn't want to. As this had been anticipated by the teacher it had been arranged that I would observe her in different areas of her learning and accompany her to different lessons out of the special education room to provide opportunities to find answers to my questions.

Anastasia's ILP detailed her learning goals for the year divided into Language and Social-Communication Goals (reading, writing and maths) and Behaviour and Functional Life Skills. The goals were evaluated three times per year (December, March and June) and assessed on a continuum of 'Early Stages', 'Developing' and 'Achieved'. The ILP was intended as a working document to guide learning and was displayed in the classroom where it was seen to be full of handwritten annotations and remarks. Evaluation of the ILP could take place at any time during the year if deemed necessary.

Anastasia essentially joined two home rooms: an age-appropriate home room and the special education classroom. She joined the age appropriate home room on a timetabled schedule which was focused on access to age appropriate peers to contribute to her social and emotional and cognitive development. Presentations were a common feature of the topic work that Anastasia was involved in and for this she was supported by her speech and language therapist and often worked at home on the topic with her parents. Besides scheduled time in the age appropriate room it was also reported by the special education teacher that it was not unusual for peers from her other home room to appear to collect Anastasia if it was thought that the class were involved in activities that she would benefit from and friends also regularly came to the special education classroom to see Anastasia during break and lunchtimes. According to her teachers Anastasia was encouraged to request help from her friends and peers rather than teachers and this was confirmed when her mother reported that it was not unusual to see peers rather than teachers helping the students from the special education unit. The school used a buddy approach when conflicts arose on the playground or around the school and the older children were trained in Peace Patrol © techniques so that they could coach the younger children in negotiating and talking through playground issues.

Anastasia also joined her home room class for extracurricular activities and during an observation period she took me across the campus to attend choir practice; it was usual for Anastasia to transition across campus independently. Anastasia told me she enjoyed choir practice and being with her friends and was going on the three day class trip to Trier. Her special education teacher reported that as she had previously visited Trier she was being supported in preparing a photo presentation to present to the class as part of the trip preparation.

Inclusion in the special education classroom allowed learning to be enhanced as sensory components were included in the learning process. This was observed while Anastasia was reciting her spellings while on a body scooter; activity and stimulation were used together. Anastasia's focus was increased while exercising and the exercises further reinforced her occupational therapy programme. The trampoline and swing were also incorporated into the learning process, if too excited she would swing, if she was falling asleep and needed stimulation she would be directed to the trampoline. Anastasia was an accomplished young horse rider and this was incorporated into her learning programme allowing the school to work through her strengths and capitalise on her love of horses.

Student B

Beatrice with moderate levels of support had been identified as dyslexic, dyscalculic, dyspraxic and hyperactive and her learning was supported through collaborative teaching, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and she attended the writer's workshop. The barriers to her learning, according to her teachers spanned across her academic learning, affected her ability to independently organise and manage time and understand multi-step assignments. Medication had been prescribed to support concentration issues. Language difficulties (receptive, written and verbal) included decoding, comprehension, legibility, sentence creation, word choice, mechanics and conventions, and producing articulate sentences. These difficulties also implicated learning in maths such that she experienced difficulties in understanding terminology, computation and reasoning. Beatrice spoke three languages; Spanish, French and English on a daily basis depending on whom she was talking to. The language of instruction at school was English. Strategies used to support learning across the curriculum and remove barriers to learning were detailed in her ILP as the use of graphic organisers, books on tape, teacher notes, partial outlines, computer use (Lexia and Texthelp), and oral presentations instead of written tasks where appropriate. Fewer homework questions were given and 25% extra time was allowed during formal exams. Modifications to the curriculum included an alternative reading level and modified standards for measuring progress and her report card reflected the modified grades. Learning goals were written for the year and progress was assessed three times per year, or more if required.

Beatrice's strengths listed on her ILP were being polite and friendly, being considerate to others, eager to perform well and motivated to learn and during the interview she was quiet and thoughtful. At the child study meeting the team reported that Beatrice had experienced significant learning successes in the previous months and this seemed to be in parallel with her increasing maturation and independence as a learner. Her case manager described how together they had looked at the work she had produced when she had been cognitively engaged and they had reflected upon how much easier it had been to read.

Student C

Colin was enrolled in mild levels of support to support the development of expressive and receptive language skills by a speech and language therapist. As a second language student whose mother tongue was Hebrew he also attended the advanced English Language Development (ELD) classes. Colin's barriers to learning were reported as being difficulties with expressive and receptive language and in addition to attending the ELD class as a second language learner he also attended speech and language therapy sessions to support the development of his expressive and receptive language. Colin was supported by the speech and language therapist both in the mainstream classroom and during small group pull out (withdrawal) sessions where he was supported in organising his written work and developing his skills in formulating questions. Accommodations included preferred seating, fewer homework questions, extra time for formal assessment and the use of calculators, graphic organisers, partial outlines and teacher notes.

Along with computer skills Colin's strengths were listed as being polite, friendly, and athletic. He reported he was looking forward to returning to his home country during the summer and knew that school would be very different but his English would be 'ten times better than everyone else'.

Observations

Anastasia

As previously discussed to supplement the interview with Anastasia she was observed in a range of learning activities outside of the special education unit.

In the age appropriate home room Anastasia was observed taking part in a whole class discussion on bullying. The class was seated in a circle and through role play they explored the perspectives of a new student entering the class. Anastasia was included in the discussion and role play and her understanding, along with the rest of the class was assessed through questioning by the home room teacher. So that Anastasia should not miss the introduction to the art lesson she was collected before the end of the lesson to re-join the special education class in the art room. I remained in the classroom until an appropriate moment to leave and on exiting the classroom the special education teacher was waiting for me, Anastasia had become very concerned that she had lost me who she had described as the new girl.

I accompanied the teacher to the art room where Anastasia had asked if I could be included and the art teacher had extended this request. I agreed and spent the following 40 minutes as a participator rather than an observer in the lesson. Anastasia fully took part in the lesson however, as a participator alongside the art and special education teacher I didn't pay full attention to Anastasia as I helped a range of students.

I accompanied Anastasia to choir practice and observed her alongside her peers from the elementary school choir over a thirty minute period. Anastasia was treated the same as the other students and she was expected to pay attention, stand and sit correctly and follow the instruction of the teacher who was conducting. The teacher frequently stopped the choir, asked particular students to sing, discussed wording, tone and asked two students to take time out until they were ready to give their full attention. Anastasia was requested to unfold her legs and was reminded that this was choir practice and not a yoga lesson and she quickly unfolded her legs and carried on singing.

I also accompanied Anastasia to occupational therapy (OT) which was in a room across campus. A donated golf cart was used to transport the students cutting down on travel time and protecting them from inclement weather. OT in the school was organised as a satellite clinic; the main practice was situated in London and the OT therapists were employed by the clinic and spent two days per week in the school.

Collaborative teaching

Two collaborative teaching (co-teaching) observations were carried out.

Colin was observed in the maths lesson and co-teaching facilitated 'push-in' support for six students in a class of 17 students. Both educators used the same strategies and approaches and both worked with all students. It was not possible to distinguish who in the room was the home room teacher, who was the LS teacher or who the supported students were. Colin's distractibility was not evident and he worked well with a peer who answered some of his questions.

Beatrice was observed in a humanities lesson. This lesson used the press coverage of the capture of Bin Laden from a range of international newspapers in a range of languages and students were encouraged to consider the story from a range of perspectives. This was a class of 22 students of which 5 had mild levels of support for a range of issues. The learning targets were displayed and the class, after whole class instruction and a preliminary discussion formed groups to answer a set of questions. Once again both the home room teacher and the LS teacher used the same strategies and approaches and both worked with all students. However, in this lesson the students receiving support were grouped together and had available to them a range of graphic organisers. Beatrice worked quietly within the group.

The interviews

The student interviews for mild and moderate levels of support were organised by the elementary head of LS who introduced me to the students. I then introduced myself, explained the purposes of the research and their role in it. I explained that they could stop the interviews or end their participation at any point during the study and that in line with the guidelines, names of the pupils, parents, staff and the school would not be used and that all names would be removed from all documents and artefacts collected. I clarified that I could not be involved in any discussions or issues that they might have with the school and that I would not be sharing or discussing their 'information' with any third party, including their teachers or parents. All information would remain confidential between us. As previously explained two of the students were forthcoming in sharing their ideas on how teachers should be supporting student learning and they answered questions with insight and maturity.

The parent interviews took place in school and the parents were open and forthcoming in sharing their answers to the questions which had been sent to them beforehand. Two sets of parents were aware of the schools approaches and strategies to removing barriers to learning for their children and understood the ILP. One of the parents however challenged the schools understanding of his child's diagnosis although the very same diagnosis he thought the school had failed to recognise appeared in the ILP; I did not follow this up with the parent or the school.

Staff interviews took place according to the schedule which I had set up with the assistance of the elementary head of LS. Despite their busy schedules everyone was very open, enthusiastic and forthcoming with their responses.

Child study meetings

Child study meetings were considered by the head of LS to be facilitators of learning and were designed for the learning team (class teachers and specialists) to consider and discuss learning progress.

The purpose of the child study meeting, to look at transition issues was stated at the beginning of the meeting. It was remarked that much reflection about learning had preceded the meeting and the following questions 'What have been the barriers to learning? How have they been removed? How do we know they have been moved? and What next?' were posed.

In the mild to moderate child study meeting, transition issues for both students were discussed. One student was to travel across campus to the middle school, while the other student was to travel back to his home country. The discussions focused on how the learning climate might be different in the new schools and how the students and the schools could be prepared to meet those learning challenges.

The child study meeting for the student with intensive levels of support focused on preparing the student for the class trip and maximising participation; cognitively, socially and emotionally. The teacher from the age appropriate home room could not join this meeting. Expertise was shared to develop strategies based on needs, connecting to interests and learning styles. It was acknowledged that there were difficulties in evaluating learning due to a short attention, short memory span and can't/won't do attitude with anything novel or not found to be interesting. There was much discussion of where and how learning was being demonstrated in addition to how medical issues may have been impacting on learning.

All meetings observed were highly collaborative with a focus on looking for solutions and considering issues from a range of perspectives. When a possible solution had been found the question – 'who can?' was posed. This sharing of pupil knowledge, from a range of perspectives according to the head of LS facilitated a holistic, strength based approach to learning which deflected away from labels and where educators were seen to identify with their students' best qualities and needs.

There was a concern from the team that if Colin's new school was not tuned into his needs, if learning strategies were not taught and if learning feedback was not given then frustration levels could lead to meltdowns which had been experienced in the past. Transition issues were discussed, solutions sought, and collaboration with the multi-agency team was witnessed. Solutions included advising the parents to find a tutor, informing the new school of successful assessment accommodations and for the speech and language therapist to prepare Colin for the transition by helping him to visualise a different learning climate. It was also decided to prepare the Colin for the transition meeting so that his voice along with those of the parents and the school team would be heard.

Around the school

Everyone encountered in the school was friendly, helpful and respectful; students, educators, administrators, staff, cleaners, lunchtime supervisors and security, even requests to change schedules was responded to positively. Noise levels were that of a busy school with people coming and going and I didn't encounter uncontrolled movement or loud noise even though students supervised themselves as they moved around the school. The staffroom where I took up residence was relaxed and friendly with the usual teacher conversations around learning; learning objectives, needs in the classrooms, schools trips, organisational issues and adults interacting together.

The main display board as one entered the building posed the question 'What is empathy?' and student work demonstrated examples they had encountered.

Inclusion observed: around and about

Two boys were observed waiting to help a student from the special education class off the school bus and there were beaming smiles and excited chatter from the three students.

On finding myself lost in the High School, I asked for help and the student replied 'Yes, I can'. This reply and the way it was said struck me and I considered that the reply could also have been a no but that this was a confirmation that she could! I realised that it was one of the students who had taken part in the inclusion panel during the first visit and who had explained that she always expressed her needs to those she met and that this was met with appreciation.

The library displays at the time of the visit were focused upon international citizenship and empathy. The elementary library had a range of books that reflected the inclusive diversity of the student population. Books dealt with topics such as 'when I am at home in America I do..... but if I am home in the Masai I do.....', 'introduction to gay couples – my two uncles', 'my Deaf sister', 'My brother M is in a wheelchair', 'stories from around the world'; fiction and non-fiction in many languages.

Peace Patrol (Peace Patrol ©) training was taking place; Year 6 students were training Year 5 students. It was explained to me by a teacher that it is the students who usually negotiate and provide solutions during recess when differences of opinion or arguments between students arise.

4.4 Documentation

Written documentation to inform the school community was available in hard copy as brochures or available as downloads via the school website.

Three school documents were collected; An Introduction to the Elementary School, Learning Support at ISX, and the ILP of the three child study students; the confidential sections of the ILP as expected were not available. The LS Handbook although collected was used as a source of general background information as its content was in the process of being updated.

The following sections describe the documents and their contents.

An introduction to the Elementary School: Brochure

The eight page glossy brochure appeared to be written for prospective families and the school's inclusive mission is marketed along with the offer of 'opportunities for success within and beyond our school'. The glossy brochure featured the school logo, graphics and photos taken around the school and described the mission and the curriculum. It dealt with learning in the elementary school

by considering the questions: What does learning look like? How do we know we are living up to our mission? A final statement offered a range of services to support parents as they made one of their most important decisions as parents.

The mission and curriculum section focused on the mission and the standards-based international curriculum. The curriculum goal to produce independent learners and international citizens who were included, challenged and successful was stated along with how the curriculum goals for independent learners (focus on deep understanding, learning how to learn and the basics) and international citizens (focus on global issues, experiential learning and language and communication) were achieved. The mission statement was claimed to be achieved through faculty professional development, support for learning, counselling and English language development.

The section entitled developing responsibility and commitment was introduced by the head of the elementary school and featured words such as exciting, exploration, discovery, mastery, foundational skills, community, talents, and contributions. The section finished with the statement 'We may come from many different places and backgrounds, but we're united by our desire for adventure, learning and being friends together'. Quotes from a student and a parent and photos of students adorned the page. The main part of this section described the curriculum, student activities, resources, field trips, technology and the library media centre.

The final section concentrated on learning in the elementary school – what does learning look like? ..and how do we know we are living up to our mission? The pattern of learning along with a sample unit of study was described and dealt with student enquiry, assessment tasks, explicit teaching, learning experiences and strategies to meet individual needs. Once more there are pictures of students which have the following words underneath; taking pride in our origins, exploring new horizons, working together, belonging, discovering, thinking and growing, giving our all and becoming our best.

Learning Support at ISX: Brochure

Once more this brochure appeared to be written for potential families. The LS brochure displayed a photo of a smiling educator and student working together and the question posed at the top of the picture was: When students learn differently, how do we respond?

The first section described how ISX was different to other schools who 'deny admission to students who learn differently'. It set out the school's responsibilities to teach all students and stated 'good communities value and educate all of their members'. It explained that inclusive education 'enriches the whole community' and disabilities exist in all nations and cultures. We are told that best practice in LS was supported by student learning facilitated through collaborative approaches, teaching teams balanced with a range of experts so that learning could be considered through different lenses and the setting of comprehensive learning goals to maximise individual learning.

Mild, moderate and intensive support was described under the question how do we offer balanced support services? Mild support was characterised through consultative support in curriculum areas in small group or out of class, the use of assistive technologies and formal accommodations. In addition to the above moderate support was further characterised by co-taught classes, small group instruction, curricular modifications and social, study and organisational skills support. Intensive support was identified as a programme that was characterised as a self-contained programme with

an inclusive component. This classroom had a ratio of two or three students to one teacher and students were supported through speech and language therapy, functional life skills, social skills, adaptive PE and music, therapeutic horse riding, assistive technologies and Occupational Therapy (OT) where needed.

Information throughout the brochure was structured to answer the following questions: What are our guiding principles? How do we offer balanced support services? How do we document specific student plans? How do we use technology to support learning? What clinical and therapeutic supports do we have in place? What formal testing is available? How do we make admissions decisions? Are there additional fees associated with this programming? What qualifications do we require of our LS faculty? What do people say about our LS department? Information in these sections detailed the contents and the use of the Individual Learning Plan (ILP), the availability of technology and software to support learning, the difficulties dealt with in speech and language therapy and OT, the availability of formal testing and the decision making processes in the admissions department.

On the final page the fee structure and the services included were discussed however the actual fees were not; contact with the head of LS was required to discuss fees. Also discussed were the qualifications of the staff in the LS faculty and the brochure concluded with four testimonials from faculty members and parents.

The Individual Learning Plan - ILP

The ILP consisted of three sections. The first page was a one page overview of accommodations, modifications and services for the student concerned. Section 2 presented student barriers to learning according to the present levels of performance and an overview of assessments and assessment scores. Section 3 was headed ISX – Learning Goals. The information was presented in a table with a main heading which was followed by a question to prompt completion by the teacher. The following headings were used: Goal (What is the impact on learning?), Persons Responsible, Strategies (How will you get there?) Assessment (How will you measure progress?) Progress: LP= limited, D=developing, A=achieved.

4.5 Summary

Each international school is different and the purpose of this chapter was to offer a description of the school and the students as seen through my eyes during the data collection visit. This chapter then has described the data collection visit and considered the participants in the larger context of the school organisation and finally we looked at school documentation that supported an understanding of the school and its inclusive nature.

The next chapter will report on the findings which emerged during the analysis of the data collected.

CHAPTER 5: THE FINDINGS

In previous chapters I have considered the research design and described the data collection. In this chapter I will present the findings after first addressing the research questions.

5.1 The research questions

The responses to the research questions will be reported in turn. The responses were collected from the interviews and child study meetings. A full table of the responses can be found in Appendix 5.

Question 1

What are the barriers to learning?

<i>Table 5.1 Summaries of the responses from the interviews and child study meetings</i>	
What are the barriers to learning?	
Summary of Responses	Who
When	SMT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no definition of learning. • There is a lack of an understanding that learning is the core business of the organisation. • A student does not understand the learning process. • A student cannot self-regulate his/her learning. • Resources are not available to meet learning needs. • Resources are not available to meet behavioural needs. • Access to the curriculum is denied. • Access to co-curricular activities is denied. • Access to social integration is denied. • Collaboration with the family is difficult or non-existent. • The school does not match the student; difficulties out of the home environment. • Learning support transfers to helplessness; 'someone will do it for me'. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frustration levels are high. • There is a lack of understanding of metacognitive processes. • There is a mismatch between the instructor and student. • There is a lack of differentiation. 	Educators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am not supported in my learning. • Feedback doesn't tell me how to get better. • The teacher does not know the student. 	Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is not enough time and contact with the teacher. • The teacher was not good for him. • The ILP objectives are not clear – how can you measure that the goal has been reached? 	Parents

The responses indicated that a barrier to learning exists when a school has not defined learning and does not understand that learning is the core business of the organisation. At the student level a major barrier to learning was considered to be a lack of understanding of the learning process.

‘The focus on learning has to be something quite precise, not a cliché, not a buzz word and for many years many of us have been looking in the wrong places. What we have done ironically is come closer to removing barriers to learning for the learning support population. We have come closer for them in the conscious strategies for doing the business with learning, the ability to articulate those strategies and understand those strategies (head of school, 4 May 2011).’

The student responses mentioned learning and the need for the teacher to get to know their students:

‘... he writes on my work what I need to do to do to be good (Student, 5 May 2011).’

‘....I would say try to get to know the student, so you can help them out (Student, 6 May 2011).’

One participant directly spoke about access; access to the curriculum, access to co-curricular activities and access to social integration as being big barriers to learning if students were denied them. Another response referred to social barriers:

‘.....removing social barriers enables them to have sense making conversations with everyone, remove social and emotional barriers then give them the tools to remove cognitive barriers (Head of school, 4 May 2011).’

The parents interviewed all understood what the barriers to learning were for their children and the implications it had on learning for them.

‘Her impulsivity, her focus, her inattentiveness, she doesn’t have the desire to learn unless it appeals to her interests. Speech, she doesn’t have very clear speech and that makes it difficult to learn because of the reciprocal nature of learning (Parent, 3 May 2011).’

‘When something is boring him, this will be a barrier to his learning (Parent, 3 May 2011).’

The completion of student learning tasks and homework by adults can deny students the opportunity to become independent learners:

‘... when support transfers to helplessness (Educator, 5 May 2011).’

A parent responded that a barrier for his child’s learning was a time factor; a delay in the teacher contacting them so they could organise support at home; ‘to help her catch up’. In this case however, I understood that the school had wanted the parents to stand back and not complete the student’s homework for her.

Parental behaviours sometimes constitute barriers to learning and in this study they were described by a senior leader as a refusal to acknowledge learning issues and a refusal to then collaborate.

A parent responded that a major issue for his child had been a mismatch between his son and a previous teacher. The child study team however presented the argument that the present progress in the student’s learning was better accounted for by his developing maturity as a learner and less to a mismatch between him and a previous teacher.

Based on my own experiences I would have expected that resourcing would have been one of the major and most discussed factors in removing barriers to learning. In this study however it was mentioned by one participant. This participant was a member of the SMT and considered resources important in meeting both learning and behavioural needs.

Question 2

Has the school removed barriers to learning and if so how?

This question elicited the most answers and below you will find a summary of the responses. The full table can be consulted in Appendix 5.

<i>Table 5.2 A summary of the responses from the interviews and child study meetings</i>	
Has the school removed barriers to learning and if so how?	
A summary of the responses	Who
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The core business of learning is managed and monitored. • Learning and learning standards have been defined. • There is a constant focus on the learning cycle. • Students are taught to understand how the learning process works and how it is different from the content. • Learning is made exciting. • All meetings are structured around learning. • Professional and school development is focused on teaching students what learning is, how it happens and how to learn. • We bring in top trainers to facilitate professional development. • The curriculum converges cognitive and affective learning. • Inclusion has been defined. • We have removed barriers between students so that they may learn together. • We recognise there is a massive emotional context to learning. • Administrative policies focus on the mission. • Our school board is selected to support the vision. • Staffing and organisational structures are in place to promote the philosophy that all children will learn optimally. • We collaborate with the multidisciplinary team to understand students. • Learning is differentiated. • Learning difficulties are circumvented by offering alternative pathways. • Learning is focused on what students are good at. • We think about learning access and how students will access? • We are all responsible for removing barriers to learning. • We hire teachers who are committed to inclusion, who differentiate and want to continue to develop. • Inclusion is a core expectation of every single teacher. • The ILP was designed to be a useable document, a reference point. • We have implemented collaborative teaching; co-teaching. • We educate the community. 	SMT

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We look for different solutions rather than saying this is a problem. • We overlap activities e.g. occupational therapy (OT) with language activities. • We set realistic goals. • Academic goals are transferred to life skills. 	Educators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I get support and feedback that tells me what I need to do to get better. • I get English language support. • I get support every week, twice a week (1x tutor and 1x speech and language) and with class teachers all the time. • I get help with writing, reading journals and math. • I just ask when I need help. • I get a head start on lessons and homework and this helps. 	Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All ILP objectives are worked on as a team and we parents are included in the team. • The focus is how to get her to learn independently. • The school has allowed me to bring in a therapist for observations and suggestions and has implemented some of the recommendations. • Here everyone is included, challenged, and successful and it really is that way. • She is often in classes with a co-teacher and that helps a lot. 	Parents

According to the findings from the previous question, the lack of a definition of learning and an understanding of the process of learning had been cited as barriers to learning. Many of the responses to this question referred to learning; the definition of learning and the learning standards, the constant focus on the learning cycle, attention to metacognition and the teaching of how the learning process was different from learning content.

‘The broad answer is give everybody tools for doing learning and then be ready to modify for every kid and some will need more than others, but it becomes the pattern of working, not the exception to the rule. We all need learning tools and some more modified than others but it just becomes a way of working and thinking (Head of school, 4 May 2011).’

Barriers were considered to exist where there was a lack of knowledge of student learning needs:

‘We think about learning experiences and how we staff and structure to provide them (Head of elementary school, 5 May 2011).’

Educators claimed to set realistic goals and the educator working in intensive levels of support clarified that they set academic goals that are transferred to life skills.

Both students described the support they received. One student referred directly to the learning feedback that explained what he needed to do to get better and remarked that:

‘This always helps me to get better (Student, 5 May 2011).’

‘The elementary years are exciting ones’ a claim made by the elementary school brochure and an SMT member claimed that learning is made exciting. A student remarked that:

‘Like when I get a project, an assignment I am excited and already to start it (Student, 5 May 2011).’

Arguably to make learning exciting for all students, teachers must know and understand their students and their barriers to learning. The home room teacher considered that removing learning barriers for all students was dependent upon a teacher’s understanding of the student and the teacher’s ability to deploy the necessary skills to remove individual barriers.

The parents considered the levels of support appropriate. One parent referred to the collaboration with the school and how this removed barriers to learning for her daughter:

‘The school is incredible that way; open minded and I am not sure how they do it with all the kids, parents, needs, languages and cultural expectations and yet I can come in as a parent with a therapist and then sit down afterwards with the school to discuss recommendations and these are then implemented (Parent, 3 May 2011).’

This same parent also referred to the mission statement:

‘Here everyone is included, challenged and successful and it really is that way (Parent, 3 May 2011).’

However, this parent was the parent who had been critical of the ability of the teachers to write ILP objectives that would remove barriers to learning for her child.

Another parent remarked that:

‘She is often in classes with a co-teacher and that helps a lot (Parent, 6 May 2011).’

In the special education classroom combining and overlapping strategies were identified as successful approaches to removing barriers to learning and the school had resourced the classroom with the equipment and space to facilitate this. I had observed the overlapping of academic and occupational therapy strategies when one of the students was seen practising her spellings while lying and scooting around the room on a body scooter.

During the child study meetings I observed the focus to be on student learning where a process of enquiry and reflection helped the team to map out individual learning progress.

CSM (Child study manager): ‘Discussions have focused on how come she isn’t moving forward as she should have - a number of questions - Why? In Feb/ March we began to notice that some things were beginning to work. Let’s talk about that shift. A child with all these difficulties - maths has been shining light and she has worked through some complex calculations with success. In calculation she is moving into expected levels – an enormous shift.’

Educator: 'She seems to be connecting her writing with other areas – she can do it – pieces of puzzle have fallen into place and she has control over them. Not yet the level she likes but.....'

The head of elementary LS likened the process to putting the pieces of a learning puzzle together. In one discussion the team identified at what point learning progress had begun and what the catalyst had been; in this case progress was first observed when the student had realised that learning was a process of which she had control over; the catalyst was identified as the explicit teaching of learning as a process to the student. The team identified the student as an independent learner who was developing deeper meanings and identifying connections through the use of taught metacognitive strategies and skills. In another student, frustration levels and meltdowns were identified as being the result of the student not having received timely, appropriate learning feedback.

Nurturing independence in student learning was considered to facilitate barrier removal and parent involvement was considered crucial to developing independence.

S< (Speech and language therapist): 'You have encouraged mum to step back. Mum was doing homework with her and doing her work for her too much. Perhaps this was the catalyst for her becoming more responsible.'

CSM: 'Very clear at beginning - parents are wonderful, warm supportive people both interested and helping her but gradually trying to move away. She is older than many of the kids and has difficulties and mum needed to hear that it was ok to stand back.'

S<: 'Rather do two on her own and get them right than do lots with her mum - she is proud that she has worked on her own.'

The child study team by supporting community members, in this case the parents enabled them to facilitate and remove barriers to learning.

Sharing the knowledge of experts and developing understanding was considered paramount by the special education teacher in removing learning barriers and this was discussed with reference to sensory perception changes in students. Students who experienced dramatic sensory changes displayed different behaviours and this was felt to be particularly difficult for educators or buddies to deal with especially when they did not understand the reasons behind the changes.

Educator (special education): 'The barriers certainly would be faded; in the beginning of the year some of the kids that come as buddies are anxious as they are new. The returning students who are used to being around them are at ease - over time that anxiety fades and weeks later you see the same students and they have realised that there is nothing to be worried or scared about. They are a kid like any other they are funny, and have things to add and share – that's really neat.'

According to a teacher and a parent, participation in the Special Olympics show cased student strengths. Success was celebrated with the whole school which created a sense of belonging so that barriers to participation were eliminated.

Educator (special education): 'There is another thing that I want to mention and that is the Special Olympics, this will be the 11th year for us and this is one way we break down the barriers. What starts out as a competition, something very much disability focused actually is a way for others to observe what they can do and so many come and watch. These parents are just so thankful that their child is being rewarded for things that they have never been rewarded for before.'

Parent: 'If you could come here for the send-off of the Special Olympics the entire school body comes out and lines up - there are cards with kid's names on, chants, the band is playing. It gives you goose bumps and the special ed. students, with their uniforms on come all the way through the cheering and clapping and everyone is there.'

The head of school explained how they provided the practical tools to empower educators to be educators of all students.

'A major piece of that (removing barriers to learning) is to work from the practical tools back to the theory. As curriculum designers we have inside information into learning; cognitive and affective learning and we try to bring convergence so that we can talk about them as kind of little chunks. From those chunks we turn them into things teachers can use; the implementation process reverses that, it is so much better to give the teachers the tools and say use these tools and by the way they are reflective of these standards....'

The selected Board, according to the head of school allows the school to select smart people who share the vision, who by sharing their professional skills and perspectives can help the school to look outwards and not inwards. The continuity of vision is supported by intelligent thinking, long term strategic planning, planning for succession, distributed leadership and looking to the future.

'Partnerships may provide financial support; they often provide conversations with like-minded individuals, groups, and organisations. It is a feature of the school and a feature of the quality of the school as we learn a lot, especially from those outside of education. In one sense we have a partnership with our Board because our own board comprises of 20 very smart people, selected from our community and we acknowledge their skills. There is a lot of knowledge sharing with partners and they bring us the knowledge from their professions.'

Question 3

How does the school know that the barriers have been removed?

<i>Table 5.3 A summary of the responses from the interviews and child study meetings</i>	
How does the school know that the barriers have been removed?	
Summary of the Responses	Who
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners take responsibility for their learning. We use a lot of data. We have different indicators that we look at, and a balance of indicators; not dependent upon a single data point. Beyond the quantitative stuff we use anecdotal and observational 	Educator SMT

<p>information about a child's wellbeing and ability to flourish in a learning climate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We track the assessment data, we observe and we ask; the combination of hard and soft data is pretty compelling. • When students feel that they are successful. • When students leave us with successful opportunities. • Through parent feedback. • We interview the child and look at the bigger picture and consider learning growth. 	
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The SMT frequently referred to data where hard and soft data was used to determine if learning barriers had been removed. The data collection process included tracking, observing and interviewing students.

‘So, I think that combination of tracking the assessment data, observing and asking kids themselves and seeing them in action and that combination of hard and soft data is pretty compelling (Head of LS, 5 May 2011).’

All data was considered to be important in helping the school to understand where barriers might be, how successful they were in removing them, and what school development was needed to address the issues. The head of the elementary schools explained that learning progress was measured using a balance and a range of indicators, as opposed to being dependent upon a single data point.

The head of LS articulated the questions that prompted data collection as:

‘Do the students feel successful? Do they have access to all they need? Are the students leaving school with successful opportunities? Do parents feedback that their children are successful? (5 May 2011).’

‘Quantitative data, observational and anecdotal data provides evidence of the ability of the student to flourish in the learning climate (5 May 2011).’

The head of school discussed how hard data had been used to demonstrate that students with learning disabilities could successfully participate in the school and achieve success in the final external summative assessments at 18.

‘Over the last few years 95 kids with identified learning disabilities took International Baccalaureate (IB) diplomas or certificates which are our most significant summative assessment and we have a 96% pass rate. This is a concrete set of data and we know if we talk about this particular population if they stay with us until high school they will take IB subjects and a high percentage will pass them. These are kids that would not be taken by other schools (4 May 2011).’

Question 4

Where barriers remain what are the implications for school development?

As a member of the SMT commented:

‘It is an unfinished journey where there is always room to do better although the school does try hard to live up to its mission statement and inclusive ethos (5 May 2011).’

<i>Table 5.4 A summary of the responses from the interviews and child study meetings</i>	
Where barriers remain what are the implications for school development?	
Summary of Responses	Who
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning support should be given in the mother tongue language. • More measurements should be made so that progress can be measured. • Teachers should be replaced quickly in the event of a mismatch between student and teacher. • The high achieving and high potential students and how we are enabling them to make as much growth as they possibly can is one of the next priorities. • We need to critically analyse and assess what is really important when making school development decisions. • The implications are is that we have to work really, really hard case by case to do the best for each student. • We need very skilled professionals who are not afraid to have those tough conversations with parents and staff. • The implication is that teachers have to be extraordinarily professional. • Space is becoming a barrier and needs to be considered. • Continued focus on data collection which takes away the judgment and keeps us real. • We are considering what tools students will need to be successful in their world in 2020. • Choosing the right people and professional development so that they have the best strategies that are available to them. 	Parent
	SMT
	Educators

School development was described in terms of a learning journey. The learning journey involved small incremental steps with consistent attention to learning conversations which considered learning barriers and the implications of removing them.

‘We recognise we are not as far along as we want to be, where we could be and how we recognise the next steps (Head of elementary school, 5 May 2011).’

‘What we have done, we have worked really closely together and have thought we are getting nowhere - no progress, so literally we have said, so next year one more thing - speech and language therapy, and next year we need a full time educational psychologist and how are we going to pay for that? (Head of school, 5 May 2011).’

The continued introduction of specialists who increased the organisational knowledge about student learning remained a focus for school development and staffing.

‘The specialists are deeply embedded in the team and contribute a particular lens to differentiation (Head of LS, 5 May 2011).’

An educator confirmed the need for appropriate staff but pointed to the fact that these educators then needed to have the appropriate professional development:

‘Choosing the right person is super, super important and then getting them on the right courses so that they have the best strategies that are available to them (Educator, 6 May 2011).’

Implications for staffing according to the head of LS concerned community perceptions that the students in LS provision take away from the other students:

‘You staff for that appropriately so that it doesn’t happen but there is a balance to be maintained and we have set ours, I think in the right place (Head of LS, 5 May 2011).’

While discussing inclusion, international schooling and the implications for school development one SMT member commented:

‘There is a loose frame here that has to be flexible and we will revisit the model all the time. There is a belief system and a set of skills and strategies that you have at any given time. The choices that you will make will depend on the students you are serving and even within the elementary school right now we have made different decisions based upon who is in at this time (Head of elementary school, 5 May 2011).’

Schools in this context have to be ready to meet the needs of an ever changing school population and this demands a degree of flexibility that needs to be built into school development cycles and long term strategic planning.

Understanding the school has limitations but at the same time not giving up on students was considered an important implication for school development.

‘We have to remind ourselves what is in our control and (we) can’t be all things to all people and there are some quite complex situations and it is not within our power to entirely remove those barriers, so complex they touch upon typically upon emotional issues. We can’t always work miracles what we can do is work to the best of our abilities, always explore new options and not give up on students but understand some limitations (Head of elementary school, 5 May 2011).’

Every SMT member referred to the recent exclusion of a student; a student who had been with the school since she was small. As an older, bigger child though she had tested the school’s limits over a period of time until the child’s parents had been supported in finding another school placement.

‘There are limits, our limits are set by ‘protecting inclusion’, as some kids could break the inclusion and create a barrier for others. We know learning disabilities have behavioural issues; they are frustrated, and are distracted and distracting and distractible but, it is not all of the time (Head of LS, 5 May 2011).’

‘So, we don’t accept kids with really, serious behavioural issues and have learned those lessons over time, it is really hard to support inclusion when it is damaging the learning of others. It has to be win, win! (Head of LS, 5 May 2011).’

Managing the inclusion balance and finding solutions to include those students who were excluded remained a point for school development as explained by the head of LS:

‘We have taken a slightly exaggerated natural cross section of the population and we have said this is what we can handle with this staffing and we are now maxed out with staffing in terms of ratio, finances and space. We can’t handle more than that and we have to refuse kids because we can’t take any more for those reasons. We think that we can successfully manage this and this is our definition of inclusion. ‘Managing a number of student needs successfully (Head of LS, 5 May 2011).’

Another SMT member referred to the existence of two sets of waiting lists that existed as the school managed the number of student needs:

‘Routinely we have to put children on waiting lists and a place has to become available. It is stressful to a family who has to make decisions which are set high and what is available for their kids but in fairness there are limits (Head of elementary school LS, 6 May 2011).’

One senior manager also referred to school development and removing barriers to learning for a group of students not represented by the students chosen for this enquiry:

‘What we haven’t talked about is linked to barriers but in terms of not setting ceilings for our students. We have a particular eye on our high achieving and high potential students and how we are enabling them to make as much growth as they possibly can. Are we giving them an optimal programme? And are we creating conditions in which those kids will grow and thrive? (Head of LS, 5 May 2011).’

Parents considered school development initiatives were necessary in the following areas; tracking and monitoring ILP objectives, developing behavioural approaches in the special education class, provision of mother tongue classes and staffing to ensure a good student/teacher fit.

‘The ILP objectives are not clear enough and therefore are harder to teach, and harder to measure so we never know if she has attained it. Then you don’t know what the next step should be (Parent, 3 May 2011).’

‘If there is a problem then it is important to give support in the mother tongue/native language. We did this on our own, we have read that the skills he has learned in English will transfer back but we feel that it is important to have it in his mother tongue also (Parent, 3 May 2011).’

‘If the school sees that a teacher doesn’t fit the kid’s need they need to change quicker. It took them two years -it is minor but if it could be changed after one semester it is better (Parent, 3 May 2011).’

Barrier removal was also considered in long-term planning discussions. Future planning was being considered in terms of what learning tools would be needed by the students to be successful in 2020:

‘Where will the school need to be in terms of core business, key partnerships and curriculum content and how will they know that they have been successful? (Head of school, 4 May 2011).’

5.2 Findings from the interviews, and child study meetings

The analysis consisted of coding the interview and child study transcripts to identify common categories and themes which are presented in Table 5.5 below (note that it had been necessary to supplement the interview with the student in intensive levels of support with observations to better understand her barriers to learning).

Table 5.5: An overview of the categories and themes that arose from the analysis of the interviews and child study meetings

Categories	Theme
Definition of learning Metacognition A community of learners: student, educator, parent Assessment Self-advocacy ILP process Learning Climate Learning Culture Transitions Difficult conversations Resources for learning; staffing provision see below	Learning
Differentiation Co-teaching Strategies for special education	Teaching
Definition Limits Culture Belonging Campus	Inclusion
International inclusive characteristics Time management Staffing provision Staffing recruitment Recruitment/appraisal School development Curriculum Partnerships Finance Admissions/Access Leadership Looking for solutions	School organisation

Collaboration Data	
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The following section will discuss each of these themes and their categories. An overview of the themes and categories for each group interviewed can be viewed in Appendix 8.

Learning

Learning: A definition of learning

According to the senior administrator the key to removing barriers to learning was the focus on learning. This focus on learning had entailed ‘the definition of learning, the creation of learning standards, and the process whereby students started to understand the learning process and the eventual self-regulation (evaluation) of their individual learning by the students’. It was reported that the learning focus also included a consideration of what learning looked like for the different groups of the school community (students, parents, and educators).

Learning: Metacognition

Metacognition; the process of learning how to learn and being aware of oneself in the learning process was referred to often. A senior leader explained that students should understand the ‘learning process separate from the content of their learning, know how it works, and have the tools’ to learn. Two of the students interviewed understood their preferred ways of learning and the purpose of the LS they received. They also reported feeling fully supported in their learning by the school, their teachers, and their peers.

Students were taught to ask questions and the student in the group requiring mild levels of support stated that he loved project work and thought that a personal strength was never giving up. The student in the group requiring moderate levels of support linked her love of language arts to the fact that she liked learning about other people. Her teachers had identified her interpersonal skills as her strengths although she herself was not sure what her strengths were when I asked her. She didn’t like maths she said but reported that she was able to concentrate very well in maths lessons in comparison to other subjects. Her teachers had reported recent success in maths and a developing independence as a learner. The student in the group requiring intensive levels of support interacted with me and gave one word answers to some of my questions. She answered questions on her likes which were her friends and horse riding but confided that she disliked the school bus. Answers were forthcoming when she could talk about horses or what she was engaged in at that point.

The importance of peer support in the learning process was mentioned by a senior leader. This was further acknowledged by the parent with a student in the special education class who felt that peer support helped her daughter to become less reliant on the adults around her. The existence of Peace Patrol (Peace Patrol ©) as described in the previous chapter is evidence of the commitment to peer support.

Learning: Assessment

It was reported by the senior leader that the school used a combination of tracked assessment data, observations and learner interviews and that this combination of hard and soft data yielded ‘compelling evidence’ with regard to learning barriers and evidence of their removal. Another SMT member commented on the process of considering hard and soft; anecdotal and observational data together to reflect the students ‘wellbeing and ability to flourish in a learning climate; it is not just

about academic levels, it is about bringing about the best we possibly can in that individual and how the child will develop’.

The head of LS agreed that a data driven approach was important and also commented on the use of data during the reporting process remarking that the data kept it real, ‘It takes out the emotion, and supports teachers in communicating the true facts as opposed to telling parents what they want to hear’.

Learning: A community of learners

Findings from the interviews indicated that the LS department focused on the process of learning and interrogating learning progression; were the students moving forward and if not, why not? What strategies, tools, resources were going to be required to enable the students to progress? Barriers according to the head of LS were removed by a constant iteration of these questions combined with monitoring progress and gathering information through student interview.

Professional learning, appraisal and classroom learning observations were referred to in many interviews and considered instrumental in removing barriers. The head of LS commented that ‘When teachers start to include you see a shift in advocacy for their students’. This advocacy was reported as becoming apparent during teacher appraisal conversations.

Responses indicated that professional development (PD) was linked to learning. Pedagogical practices, meetings and leadership development were all structured around learning. The majority of the PD was organised ‘in house’ according to the head of LS. The annual summer institute where attendance was voluntary, unless prioritised through the appraisal cycle, attracted around half of the faculty and was characterised by ‘intrinsic motivation and a spirit of being there’. The voluntary nature of the institutes removed barriers to participant learning, and was considered the perfect PD model; ‘fun, relationship building and invigorating’.

Knowledge of research into learning needs and effective teaching strategies was considered crucial by the senior administrator and critical to the success of the educators in removing barriers to learning. In addition to possessing the skills necessary for teaching international students, educators needed to be highly skilled in the area of removing barriers to learning for a wide range of learners. Educators were described as being more likely to evaluate learning progress through the learning data they gathered as opposed to purely what they see or feel when they were knowledgeable in the area of inclusive education.

Educators reported that they were expected to self-review their own knowledge and appropriate professional development requests were honoured. As previously discussed one of the educators had praised the school for the amount of PD they provided and commented that it was important to recruit those prepared to learn new strategies. However, he clarified that this had to be complimented by the school providing the professional knowledge.

Responses indicated that removing barriers to learning was dependent upon educating the whole school community and this included the parents. It was also usual for parents and educators to attend training sessions together.

The school also played a lead role in sharing its inclusive practice with international schools across the world and this was witnessed during my attendance at the three day conference entitled 'The next frontier inclusion' (and reported in Chapter 4).

Learning: The ILP process

The child study manager (CSM) was reported as being instrumental in the ILP process. The responsibility of the CSM was to synthesise complicated specialist information into educator friendly ILP narratives designed to influence practice. The CSMs were expected to know each individual student exceptionally well and to ensure that the teachers understood how to differentiate for that student.

The ILP process was collaborative and entailed that learning goals were negotiated within the team and then presented to the parent and student for further negotiation. Multidisciplinary team members were included in the collaborative ILP process to ensure that communication and sensory components of learning were encompassed. Collaborative conversations which considered the learning from many angles and perspectives and 'encouraged all issues to emerge which may have affected the end goal' were deemed important.

A consideration of learning barriers, their removal and the evaluation of learning progress took place during the annual ILP cycle. ILP evaluations took place three times during the year so that learning progression and strategies could be observed and tracked over the one year period; further evaluations and rewrites were encouraged. In the special education class handwritten annotations adorned the ILPs which were displayed on the walls.

One of the parents considered that the ILP learning objectives could be smarter so that a more accurate measure of learning progress could be made. She reported that:

'Barriers to her at school are usually centred on, in my opinion, determining what an objective goal is and measuring the objective goal; simplifying a goal for her. The ILP objectives are not clear enough and therefore are harder to teach, and harder to measure so we never know if she has attained it. Then you don't know what the next step should be (Parent, 3 May 2011).'

Learning: Transitions

Two of the students would be transitioning through to secondary school and their child study meetings focused on facilitating the transitions. The meetings discussed the recommendations for each student and possible bridging strategies so that transition reports could be provided to the new school. The discussions by the multi-agency team were collaborative, focused on finding solutions and considered the whole student as demonstrated by the child study discussion below:

S<: 'Will he be in a national or international school next year?'

Educator: 'A national school, a big challenge.'

CSM: 'This a big challenge; we are meeting with parents in June and it is good to be able to give this good feedback but also good to give them recommendations.'

S<: 'It is very different there as either one-to-one support or they get support after school - so this is going to be hard.'

English language teacher: 'Survival in the larger setting!'

S<: 'Lots of book work.'

CSM: 'So, how would he cope in terms of these conditions can he be prepped for the new school?'

S<: 'I can do this – discuss the differences and pose him some questions.'

CSM: 'In terms of this it will be good to help him visualise. Anything once he is there? Would we recommend a tutor for him to make some of those bridges?'

Educator: 'Maths could be a bit of challenge as he is now in a smaller group and paced but in a larger class going much quicker and with new vocabulary?'

CSM: 'Would you recommend a tutor for maths – at least to start out with?'

S<: 'Not sure just a maths tutor, it would be good to have someone there to help him organise. Here he gets all that scaffolding and extra time and extra questions that he can ask. But someone after school to organise things and give him that time to work and have someone to ask the questions. Certainly think that any accommodations should be extra time in testing.'

It was recognised that for one student choosing subject electives to celebrate strengths was going to be important for future success. The group then went on to decide who would work with her to prepare her to make those choices. The most appropriate and effective ways of communicating the learning recommendations to the schools were also discussed.

Learning: Student empowerment –self advocacy

According to the head of school, the learning support population were better able to articulate their learning needs and it was hoped that the new curriculum, developed by the school would help readdress this balance. Students were considered empowered when they were responsible for their own learning.

'Tell me about how you learn, we'll look at how you learn and then we'll do it together'. Tell me what you find difficult ok, let's look at some ways where you don't have to do that stuff, let's focus on what you are good at (Head of school, 4 May 2011).'

Self-regulation, self-advocacy and pupil empowerment were considered to develop in students when they understood how they learned and understood the learning process.

Learning: A Learning culture

Learning was a common theme when listening to different members of the community whether it was students, parents, educators or those with roles in the business, human resources or school administration departments. The learning culture had been developed through increasing the understanding of what learning was and it was considered core business by the senior leader:

'If the whole school is consciously working on what learning is and the things that make it happen, and there are enough teachers teaching the kids explicitly how to use these tools

what you have done is equipped the kids to think about the learning process (Head of school, 4 May 2011).'

The elementary head of LS commented that the learning culture ensured that learning was monitored so that shifts in learning success could be identified.

The collaborative nature of the learning culture was witnessed during the child study meetings when educators worked together to remove learning barriers. The child study manager commented 'that the pieces of the learning puzzle came together in these meetings'. For one student learning was considered in terms of the student having gained control over learning, understanding this control and developing an awareness of what contributed to success. It was reported that empowered learners developed deeper meanings, saw learning connections, used individual skills and learned strategies to enhance their learning.

Educators described their students in positive terms and strengths were identified. It was acknowledged that it was important to remember that learning success included more than the academics. A holistic vision of learning that took into account the developing maturity of the young person was observed.

Learning: Difficult conversations

The head of LS considered the role of the LS team to be a supportive one. Supporting the whole community during times of pressure and uncertainty depended upon a climate of professionalism where educators know how to conduct learning conversations which did not become personal or hurtful. A discussion on the mismatch of a student and teacher was observed during a child study meeting; the discussion remained professional and did not become personal. It was acknowledged that if all voices were to be heard to optimise learning then learning discussions could be painful; 'These are barriers we don't want to touch on but they can be very real'. The climate, it was reported had to be considered safe by all members if information is to be shared, risks taken, and mistakes considered as integral to the learning process.

Teaching Strategies

Teaching strategies: Differentiation

According to a member of the SMT, inclusion was about students learning differently, teachers understanding and responding to that need through collaborative practices and the implementation of practical strategies. Differentiation was considered as doing things differently so that the student could access the learning. It was considered that simple solutions such as seating arrangements, checks on student understanding and supporting the student in getting started were some of the most effective strategies in common use and good practice for all students.

When asked if they had any advice to give to schools to support pupil learning, two students considered the question and offered their advice. One response already discussed considered motivation for the student and helping them to understand. The other advised that educators should 'Get to know the student, so you can help them out'.

The multidisciplinary, child study team contributed to differentiation through collaboration with the home room teachers. Strategies proposed by the S< and OT were combined with classroom strategies to enhance the communication and sensory components of learning. The speech

pathologist supported presentations and pre-taught work to be carried out in the classroom, the OTs provided exercises that could be practised in conjunction with, and at the same time as academic and social learning.

Both students who were full-time in the mainstream school fully understood what the aims of the different learning supports they received were and one student understood the learning outcomes both for himself and his peer during speech and language therapy sessions. Awareness of the learning process and what the teacher had done to influence this was acknowledged by the student when he commented that his teacher explained to him what he needed to do to be good; 'he teaches me how to use words'. The student explained that his questions were always answered, he was taught to understand across the subjects and planning and organisation was supported by one of his tutors. His strengths and likes were articulated as a motivation to learn and a love of project work especially when connected to his interests. He stated that his first day was the best school experience that he had ever had and further commented that 'In other schools, the teachers aren't that nice to you, they don't explain to you, they write things on the board and you have to copy them'. This school 'teaches you more, to understand and if you don't understand you can ask questions, and even ask the teacher if you can have a private lesson with them (Student, 5 May 2011)'.

Teaching strategies: Collaborative teaching (Co-teaching)

The most effective ways of supporting pupils in their context had been identified by the school as a balance of collaborative teaching (co-teaching), small group teaching, and one-on-one support. Co-teaching (Murawski, 2010) had been identified as a powerful strategy that would support the school in living up to its mission to include, challenge and provide success. In this context the two teachers were working together as equals and jointly shared teaching, assessment and delivery tasks. All parents interviewed considered that teaching at the school supported learning and co-teaching was named by one parent as being instrumental in breaking down learning barriers for his child.

Co-teaching as opposed to the employment of teaching assistants was the main method of supporting learning in the school. At the time of the data collection one teaching assistant was employed in the elementary school. This was a temporary arrangement to support the transition of a new student on the autistic spectrum with limited knowledge of English. The homeroom teacher described the absence of teaching assistants as adding something to the class; 'it teaches tolerance as all members of the class take responsibility for learning and inclusion'.

Co-teaching in the school was reported as continuing to develop. The journey had involved training and was dependent upon good relationships between teachers. Co-teaching required time for teachers to plan and collaborate and it had far reaching organisational implications. Support and commitment at the senior management level was described as crucial by the head of LS.

Teaching strategies: Strategies unique to the special education classroom

Teaching, programme design, assessment and evaluation were of a collaborative nature in intensive levels of support. A multidisciplinary team was involved in evaluating and assessing the learning barriers and their removal to ensure learning progression. Classroom teaching strategies combined with sensory approaches were used to enhance learning in the special education classroom and pre-teaching enhanced and optimised the learning process in the home room.

The home room teacher reported that the student receiving intensive levels of support while in his room knew and understood the class expectations. He didn't feel that there was anything solely designed for her in terms of teaching or learning strategies that he utilised in the classroom.

Inclusion

Inclusion: A definition of inclusion

The school's definition of inclusion is 'Managing a number of student needs successfully'. The school using statistics from the United States (2008) Census, reported that they reflected a 'normal' population in that 15% (2008, US Census Bureau Report) of pupils had identified learning needs. The 15% was in addition to the international nature of the population and its specific needs in terms of English language learning (ELL), cultural understanding and the presence of students with patchy and diverse educational backgrounds.

As staffing, finance and space had reached their limits a waiting list was presently reality for those students applying with learning support needs. It was commented by a SMT member that the school is 'an inclusive, high-ended academic school' and had to be careful not to tip the balance therefore 'inclusion' had to be at the core of strategic and organisational planning. It was explained that an organisational reality was the management and monitoring of the ratio to enable the core business to be successful but the reality was the existence of two admissions waiting lists to 'manage' the LS admissions and to comply with the school's definition of inclusion.

Inclusion: Limits to inclusion

It was acknowledged that there were limits to inclusion, that the journey was a slow cumulative one, that there were issues for school development and that the decision to be an inclusive school impacted on everyone right down to the costs of resources and who benefitted from them.

The head of school agreed that there were barriers to learning but this did not stop the school from trying to remove them and redefine the learning for the student. He considered that it was possible to provide an environment that enhanced individual confidence and social interaction, and provided strategies and tools so that the students could reach their own learning goals. Positive attitudes and high, realistic expectations had resulted in some transformational changes in students with intensive needs. Limits to inclusion were described by the head of school as not being able to 'serve the student' and had been experienced as unpredictable, violent behaviour that could only be controlled through restraint. It was however considered acceptable that students with learning disabilities experienced frustration and distractibility and could be distracting to those around them; these behaviours did not give reason for exclusion. A recent exclusion had characterised the limits to inclusion for the school and each of the senior managers had referred to this case which had brought into question the safety of other students.

The head of LS commented that a school can always decide not to serve students in the community and write statements and policies to exclude but this did not remove the moral responsibility to the students in the community. The head of school commented that there are instances when the school is the best setting for that student and there is a duty to then serve those in the community.

The limits to inclusion in this school context then were found to be:

- When students experienced 'emotional or behavioural disorders' (Learning support at ISX) and the necessary therapeutic supports were not available.
- When parents did not have the financial means at their disposal to pay for the school fees.
- When the inclusion balance had been reached.

It was acknowledged that limits to inclusion were influenced by having to protect the inclusion balance so that the school could remain an inclusive school as opposed to an international, special education school.

Inclusion: An inclusive culture

According to a member of the SMT the inclusive culture had been developed by means of effective communication through listening, looking for solutions and developing the professional characteristics of collaboration, integrity, understanding and support for the school community.

Responses in the interviews and child study meetings indicated that teachers believed all pupils were capable of learning and it was for them to provide the teaching for a learning climate that would support students in reaching their potential. The home room teacher indicated that he was comfortable and accepting of the differences in his students 'Not everyone develops at the same rate; intellectually, physically and emotionally and here they are learning from their own experience', similar comments were encountered during interviews and in discussions with other participants. Furthermore this home room teacher reported that he was supported to include students from intensive levels of support and was always included in the decision-making process of placing a special educational student in his classroom.

Inclusion: An inclusive campus

Students belonging to the special education classes also belonged to an age-appropriate home room. The special education class was a dedicated unit resourced (sensory rooms, bathrooms, and rest spaces) according to needs and age. Time spent in the two classrooms was timetabled according to individual learning needs but also took into account therapy and medical schedules.

The special education teacher did not feel that the special educational unit was isolated on the campus. Buddies regularly visited the unit and the students also belonged to their home rooms. The home room teacher commented that there was two-way traffic and that the special education class was not an excluded unit on the campus. Home room inclusion was scheduled but flexibility was expected to take advantage of spontaneous opportunities to enhance the social aspects of learning.

The collaborative effort was considered crucial to the inclusive campus; everyone including the student needed to be informed of goals and expectations if learning barriers were to be removed. Collaborative learning was observed and peer support was facilitated to optimise learning and develop independence. Increased independence involved the actions of peers on the playground, in the class, in choir and in extra-curricular activities and they also need to be informed of goals and expectations. At the time of the data collection the student receiving intensive levels of support was being supported to develop her independence and this had entailed coaching her peers as she was particularly good at appealing to them so that they would carry out her tasks.

Inclusion: Belonging

Creating a sense of belonging was considered crucial in breaking down learning barriers; it was remarked that Anastasia had connected with the girls in the class and trusted them. The expectations on students are made explicit and the development of independence and individual personality are supported and encouraged so that students identify and belong in the classroom. It was observed that the behavioural expectations on Anastasia were the same as for the other

students both in the home room and the music lesson; her response to being told that 'this is a music lesson and not a yoga session' had her quickly unfolding her legs and sitting up straight. The teacher reported that the questioning strategies observed and used with Anastasia in the home room were those common to all students.

The school strived to include the students in the home room as often as possible however it was recognised that time and scheduling were also barriers to inclusion; attendance at therapy sessions and hospital visits was a regular occurrence for many students in the special education class. The amount of inclusion and the aims of inclusion were different for each student but there was an emphasis on creating relationships that nurture the sense of belonging. Students participated in the same activities with appropriate supports so that the same outcomes could be reached. Anastasia was also expected to give presentations to demonstrate her learning alongside her home room peers. Both parents and the speech pathologist were instrumental in preparing her for the presentations however the support during the presentation would be given by a peer. The process for Anastasia, her educators and peers was a collaborative process enabling her to experience enjoyable, successful inclusion which included field trips, recess, and social activities.

I felt welcomed and this feeling was confirmed by one of the students; 'amazed how organised it was on my first day I was made comfortable with only knowing a little English'. All three students commented on their friendships reporting that they had lots of friends.

The Special Olympics parade nurtured a sense of belonging to a greater community for the students in the special education classroom and allowed them to share their strengths with the school.

School organisation

School organisation: International and inclusive

A senior member of management described the international school sector as a 'no excuses sector' which was free from national, political decision-making, and under-resourcing. Considered as an 'interesting and intriguing set of opportunities due to the multilingual populations that are diverse in a range of areas leads to an intriguing professional challenge' by the head of school he went on to clarify that the school was not for those who sought 'easy work'. He also described the school as a privileged work place with 'incredibly caring parents who care for their kids, with great resources and a chance to work with great colleagues who are very dedicated to the philosophy'.

Although the school was free from national educational policies there were implications with regard to host country labour laws. In the case of this school, national labour laws and social charges were quoted as being the reason why the school was one of the most expensive international schools in the world to hire staff.

In recognition of the huge range of language backgrounds of the incoming student population the 'English Language Development Programme' was available to all students. One student commented that English was his second language and he was proud of having acquired a second language while at the school. The school also offered the opportunity to learn and maintain a range of languages so that the students had the 'skills necessary for participation in teams and in the world community of the 21st Century' (Introduction to the Elementary School). This commitment to the development of language was exhibited by the student receiving moderate levels of support who although was identified as having communication challenges was trilingual and reported to using the three languages on a daily basis with different family members.

The parent of the student in intensive levels of support reported that her daughter was proud of her national heritage and is 'encouraged by the international aspects of the school to belong to something bigger'.

Inclusion had been defined according to the head of LS to 'develop common understandings', 'clear up any misconceptions' and respond to the 'differing expectations' present in such a culturally diverse population. The interview responses and analysis of the documentation indicated that the school was committed to developing the climate and conditions necessary for inclusion as well as the skills and understanding to educate an internationally mobile population. A loose framework for inclusion which included a belief system and sets of skills and strategies was proposed as facilitating the flexibility needed to meet the needs of the ever changing population, a 'model that is revisited all the time' according to another senior leader.

School organisation: School development

The inclusion journey is reported as having involved small incremental steps based upon a data driven approach to school development. A constant learning conversation around what learning was and how it happened and the implementation of the learning conversations into the school had been a conscious focus and approach. Learning conversations with school partners had also influenced school development. The head of school considered that the school was great at teaching the students how to learn and explained that students were taught to think about the learning process separate from the content of their learning so that the 'barriers to learning begin to evaporate'. School development was found to be centred on continuing to remove learning barriers as they arose and these findings were supported by staff comments.

Another SMT member explained how inclusion had been a process of development. The school had moved from a position of a difference in understandings, service delivery, paperwork, and admission decisions between the four levels of schooling to cohesion and continuation across the four schools which encompassed the whole school campus.

Development according to the head of school and head of LS was linked to professional development and 'working hard' at what they were already good at. It was also reported that the current strategy was to offer the staff the practical tools and then to go back to the theory via the learning standards. Classroom lives were described as being too busy to translate general principles into everyday practice, educators were thought to need a variety of living examples of what doing better means in practice. Where possible these examples were given by educators with whom they could identify and from whom they could derive the conviction and confidence that they could also implement.

While learning was cited by all members of the SMT as being at the core of their business, one member did comment on the difficulties of keeping the focus on learning in such a large and dynamic school. She cautioned that it was necessary to 'identify, critically analyse and assess the many proposed and undertaken projects' stating that it was possible to 'become overwhelmed which created further barriers to learning'. Inclusion, she reflected had to make sense; it had to be part of the vision; core business because a school has to be focused and prepared to work to make inclusion happen.

School organisation: Time Management

Co-teaching and collaborative planning were experienced as time intensive strategies that implicated on timetabling and staff resources. Time management was reported as critical and procedures and processes were designed to be manageable; the ILP for example was written once per year, checked off three times per year with re-evaluations and rewrites when required.

School organisation: Long term thinking and planning

The school board had been selected for their commitment and ability to put into place and uphold an inclusive vision according to the mission of the school. The approach according to the head of school had ensured long term thinking and planning which in turn had led to a low turnover of school leaders. This situation had he reported increased sustainability in both policy making and practice; sustainability had contributed to the continued development of inclusive practices.

School organisation: Looking for solutions

The school was described by one SMT member as a school with a group of diverse learners where 'the dynamic environment required a solution focused approach which was critical to its success'. The culture of enquiry was intended to move learning forward and to find solutions while being realistic about the difficulties. An example of the culture of enquiry and solution seeking could be seen in the cost-effective partnerships, such as OT sought for the enhancement of pupil learning.

School organisation: Admissions

Decisions to deny access were made at the time of application and based upon the levels of support present in the school and the perceived ability to meet the needs of the student. The leading question during the admissions research stage was considered to be 'Are the children in the right place?' Information was collected through documentation submitted by parents, consultation with parents, and contact with previous schools. Parents were encouraged 'to share information about their child's learning profile and/or any known learning disabilities' (LS brochure) so that each student would 'have a positive start'.

School organisation: Leadership

As previously discussed the school had put in place strategies to ensure board continuity. Leadership structures were also designed to ensure leadership continuity which further contributed to organisational sustainability and the continued commitment to the inclusive vision.

The school leadership team regularly looked out to, and reached out to thought and organisational leaders outside of education to inform school development. 'Schools looking inwards are more likely to repeat their mistakes' the head of school reported.

School development had involved the growth from one special education classroom serving those students with intensive needs to three special education classes, one in each school. The head of LS was considered by her colleagues as responsible for this expansion and the school leadership was considered to have strengthened the LS department by diminishing staff turnover and consolidating organisational learning.

School organisation: Curriculum

The school was in the process of developing their own concept-based curriculum. This concept-based curriculum would provide the tools for learning and answer some of the difficult questions that international schools are faced with when it comes to curriculum content. According to the head of school the impetus for the development of the curriculum had been their continued focus on learning, the latest research and the schools identification of appropriate pedagogical practices from the research. According to the head of LS the new curriculum would blend with the senior high school programme; an externally provided international pre-university programme. The curriculum was used throughout the school and learning objectives were accessed at levels applicable to the

student. To meet the diverse needs of the population it was reported that the journey to the end goal was flexible. The teachers were expected to track back and forth through the curriculum content and use what was applicable on an individual basis. Expectations on the students were high, but stated as being realistic.

School organisation: Recruitment and appraisal

Inclusion was described as core business and had to be reflected in the recruitment and appraisal process. According to the head of LS the recruitment process was designed to bring in those educators who would facilitate inclusion and student learning. Pedagogy and practices underpinned by research and knowledge were described as crucial to removing barriers to learning. The appraisal process demanded that the appraiser focus on student learning during classroom observations. The appraiser was required to consider how the teacher reflected the school's identified core competencies, how they applied the curriculum and used a repertoire of strategies to meet learning needs, how they understood their students and their ILPs, and how they collaborated within the multidisciplinary team.

School organisation: Staffing

The mission, philosophy and commitment to learning were reported as demanding a large, collaborative and multidisciplinary team with the appropriate structures in place. As pointed out by an SMT member the philosophy of the school stated that 'all students learn and learn optimally' therefore staffing levels needed to reflect this and indeed she described them as 'terrific'. The employment of experts in the field of inclusive education were described as contributing to the success of the school in removing learning barriers; 'these specialists, deeply embedded in the team contribute a particular lens to differentiation'. Parents and educators reported that appointing the right staff into the school and then maintaining the required levels of staffing to remove barriers to learning for the school population were crucial.

School organisation: Collaboration

A collaborative approach ensured that all members were included in discussions, recommendations, and negotiations and non-collaboration was considered a major barrier to learning by a senior leader. Parents were considered to be partners in learning and their perspectives and collaboration sought to optimise learning.

Educators identified the sharing of expertise and collaboration as important factors in removing barriers to learning and collaboration was facilitated by the use of email and open forms of communication. Discussion, negotiation and collaboration from a range of perspectives and experts were witnessed during the child study meetings. Multiple perspectives were sought and listened to. Learning strategies, roles and responsibilities and time frames were considered by the team from multiple perspectives.

One parent described her collaboration with the school; 'I can come in as a parent with a specialist therapist, a specialist that I am employing, and then sit down with the school to discuss recommendations that are then implemented'. The parent reported that she had not encountered this level of collaboration in other schools.

School organisation: Finance

As a private establishment the school received no government or European funding at the time of the study and school fees were in line with other international schools in the city. As is common on the international circuit the school fees would have, in the majority of cases been paid for by the parent's employers. Extra funds incurred for individual therapies or support for learning may also have been covered by medical insurances however, not all extra costs above those negotiated when contracts were initially issued would be refunded. In these instances a lack of funding becomes a huge barrier to learning.

It was commented by an SMT member that attaching a monetary value to learning support is itself a barrier to learning but funding had to be found to resource the services required; the employment of a multidisciplinary team was described as coming at a price. The head of LS argued that 'Schools should not be expected to assume those costs if someone else will pay for them. If people are being moved around the world then the employers should take some responsibility' and she worked hard with parents to find funding from employers, governments, insurance companies and a range of organisations.

School organisation: Partnerships

The head of school considered partnerships to be part of the success in removing barriers; 'going farther together, farther than we could on our own' and partners 'who believe and share our values' are chosen. Partnerships (board, business, and parents) were described as adding quality; they provided solutions and supported the school in being 'street smart and pragmatic' which contributed to removing barriers to learning and creating learning opportunities. Business partners at the time of the research were reported as including companies that provided student internships, financial support, and OT.

Cost-effective partnerships were sought to enhance learning and this was demonstrated by the provision of OT that was run as a satellite clinic from a London base. The school could not afford to hire OTs but parents could hire them and claim back expenses through medical insurances. Students, space and some administrative services were provided by the school and in return OT and professional knowledge was provided by the clinic. Partnerships were described as offering inspirational learning opportunities and sometimes role models.

The four parents interviewed felt involved as partners in their child's learning. The most involved was the parental partnership with the special educational unit; this parent was a specialist in the field of behaviour therapy and her expertise and knowledge was used and she considered valued by the school. The parents of the student in mild levels of support felt included and involved but commented that they considered their child independent and responsible for his own learning, they trusted him and the school to get it right but were there if needed. The support given when an early diagnosis in a language other than their mother tongue was being made and the early learning intervention then put in place was appreciated by another parent; 'the school is really open and it is a great school'.

The partnership between the parent with the student receiving intensive levels of support appeared to be a strong and positive one, she commented 'The school is incredible that way; open-minded and I am not sure how they do it with all the kids, parents, needs, languages and cultural expectations'. Her ideas on more effective ways of organising homework had been accepted and

changes had been made accordingly. This parent also commented that the school had listened to and taken into account her goals for her child; happiness and independence.

School organisation: Data

The SMT frequently referred to data and the use of data during the interview. Hard and soft data was felt to be responsible for providing the school with the knowledge that barriers had been removed and informed the school development agenda. Analysis of the data was described as a wrestle by one team member; ‘understanding what data, what synthesis and what we can learn from it’.

The head of LS commented that the use of data during reporting kept it real when reporting to parents.

This section has discussed the themes that emerged from the data during analysis of the interviews and child study meetings. The next session will consider the themes that arose from the analysis of the school documentation.

5.3 School Documentation

This section will consider the themes and categories that emerged during the analysis of the collected documents see Table 5.6. The following documents were collected:

- An introduction to the elementary school
- Learning support at ISX
- The ILP.

The documents and their contents were described in the previous chapter.

<i>Table 5.6 An overview of the categories and themes that arose from the analysis of the documentation</i>	
Theme	Categories
Learning	Metacognition A community of learners – student, educators, parent Assessment Self-advocacy ILP process Transitions Resources for learning: staffing provision see ‘School organisation’ below
Teaching	Differentiation Co-teaching Strategies for special education
Inclusion	Definition Limits Culture Belonging Campus
School organisation	International inclusive characteristics Staffing provision

There was a great coincidence between the themes arising from the interview and child study analysis and the analysis of the documentation see Appendix 9 and no new themes or categories emerged from the analysis of the documentation.

A SMT member had commented that common understandings were developed across the community through the explicit articulation of inclusion in documents and procedures. This was echoed in the findings as there was a strong coincidence between the practice as reported by the participants and the rhetoric of the documentation collected.

5.4 Stakeholder interpretations of inclusion

While the findings of the study indicated that the school demonstrated a social model of disability an analysis was carried out to find out what the students and parents as stakeholders thought inclusion to be. Summarised responses of the stakeholder perspectives can be found in Appendix 7.

The school considered learning as the key to inclusion but the emphasis was placed on different aspects at different organisational levels. The senior management team considered inclusion at a whole school level to include recruitment and professional learning while the educators were more focused on individual student learning in conjunction with their own learning. The concerns of the school team for removing barriers to learning for these students demonstrated the social model of disability; they felt it was their responsibility to remove the barriers to learning for their students.

The multidisciplinary, student child study team considered learning progress, school transition and the outcomes if the new schools were not completely successful in removing barriers to learning for the students. Where limits had been reached or barrier removal had been unsuccessful solutions were considered to increase present and future access and participation. Concerns were voiced for one of the students who experienced 'meltdowns' if not supported in using his identified learning strategies. The team were concerned that such meltdowns could become a barrier to his successful inclusion in the new school and considered action needed to make sure that the appropriate information reached the appropriate person in the new school.

One parent appeared to be confused as to the role the school had taken in removing barriers to learning for their child. They commented that no discounts or extra time for him were expected and that that barriers were his personal ones. While the onus appeared to be on their son to change and fit the system they were also critical of the school for not changing a teacher and recommended the school should provide learning support in the mother tongue. While the school, according to its literature aimed to develop common understanding across the community these findings imply that the school's view of inclusive schooling and the parents' views were not reconciled. This indicates the need for a continual focus on developing common understandings across the community.

Another parent remarked that the school did live up to its inclusive mission, 'nothing special, all part of it (the classroom)'. From this remark I interpreted that this parent challenged the deficit model and understood that successful inclusion for their child was brought about by the school removing the barriers to her learning. Although critical of the ability of the school to create SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results focussed, Time focussed) teaching goals she remarked that no school before had embraced her and her wishes for her daughter to the extent that this school had.

One other parent voiced his appreciation of the support that they received while diagnostics tests were being carried out in a language other than their own. I inferred from parental responses that the parents considered their own inclusion in the community had a role to play in removing barriers to learning and they appreciated that their language needs had been understood and met.

Inferring what the students considered inclusion to be was more difficult as only a small amount of data was collected. While the student in mild levels of support was talkative the student in moderate levels of support was more reticent answering in short answers and 'don't knows'. There was little information gained from the student in intensive levels of support. However, when asked what advice they would give to schools to support student learning two students offered pertinent comments. One student replied that it was important that schools should get to know the students. The other student remarked that he thought that his first day at this school would be the best school experience that he would ever have; 'the school makes you comfortable with your surroundings' further remarking that 'he didn't know English on his first day'. I interpreted these comments to mean that inclusion for the students incorporated the social and emotional elements of learning in addition to the cognitive elements. Attention to the social and emotional aspects of learning helped the school create a sense of welcome and belonging to all newcomers including those with little to no English.

Implications for inclusive learning, teaching and school organisation according to stakeholder interpretations of inclusion

Due to the differing backgrounds and cultural expectations of parent populations many models or understandings of inclusion may exist between families and within a school community and this school was no exception. One set of parents stated that it was up to their child to fit in with the school but later in the interview suggested that learning support should be given in the mother tongue; a resource intensive suggestion for a school with many languages represented in the student body. These differing understandings and expectations indicate that professional learning across the whole school community is crucial if the school is to develop common understandings. Due to the transient and unpredictable nature of members of the community repeated professional learning at regular intervals; at least annually and in line with the needs of the school community and school development initiatives is a reality.

Inclusive Learning

Parents voiced appreciation that they were considered partners when planning learning for their children. This implies that the school had developed the mindsets of members of the community to embrace this expectation and had devoted time in school schedules for parents to be invited into the school.

One parent was critical of the schools lack of employing SMART learning goals to optimise learning, this same parent wanted more attention paid to the noise levels in the special education classroom in an effort to limit learning distractions. The special education class; a self-contained unit with an inclusive component was supported by a team of specialised professionals working with the teachers and geared to the individual needs of students. Students requiring intensive levels of support attended the special education unit and had access to a range of therapies (see Chapter 4) that were built into their daily schedules. In addition, the students also belonged to a home room classroom

where they attended mainstream lessons with peers of the same age. Reducing distracting noise levels has implications for professional learning and inclusive teaching if behavioural issues were the root of the perceived problem. The root of the noise had not been followed up with the parent. If noise issues were due to space or acoustics then structural changes are implicated. The professional development and structural changes required to reduce noise levels and develop SMART learning goals put demands on finance, planning and organisation if changes are to be made.

The inclusive aspects of learning that the students considered important also implicated planned learning across the organization. If the sense of welcome that the student referred to as being so very important is to be achieved for all students then attention that the social and emotional elements of learning are fundamental. Further student considerations involved teachers giving effective feedback to aid learning progression and learning with peers. The promotion of peer learning from perspective of these students can be considered to be a valued aspect of the learning cycle. Both students talked about the range of teachers that supported learning and the ease to which they had access to them implicating long term planning to maintain staffing ratios and the professional learning to develop this inclusive practice.

A range of professional learning across the community is crucial if inclusive learning and common understandings are developed to support inclusive practices.

Inclusive Teaching

For one parent the implications for teaching for inclusion involved teachers creating SMART learning goals that measured learning progress so that next steps could be easier planned for. The same parent proposed that the school should use data monitoring tools to track learning progress to facilitate future learning.

Differing parent perspectives on teaching for independence were seen in the parent body. One parent lamented the lack of constant contact with teachers to support home learning while I understood that the school had created the distance in an effort to help the student take control of her own learning. Another parent was appreciative of the school in working with them to develop skills that would lead to her living an independent life.

In addition to the cognitive aspects of learning the students also referred to the social aspects and this coincides with the schools references to the importance of social and emotional learning. Teaching and learning to address social and emotional learning alongside the cognitive aspects would appear from these findings to enhance the feelings of belonging. The students spoke positively about learning from and with their peers and the use of peers in the learning cycle could be considered a facilitating factor in increasing inclusive practices from the student perspective. The use of specific feedback to support learning progress was an important practice in removing barriers to learning for one of the students. The practices mentioned above by the students implicate the necessity of professional learning to develop the appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding across the community.

School organisation

The implications on the school organisation from the parents fell mostly in the area of staffing and recruitment; timely changing of educators to optimise educator student relationships, employment

of experienced teachers, early intervention and educators who could provide diagnostic expertise. One parent felt that collaborative teaching; where two fully qualified teachers work together and share full responsibility for teaching and assessment, planning and organisation had been instrumental in removing barriers to learning. Employing two fully qualified teachers working on an equal basis in one classroom is a major shift away from the practice of employing a less qualified and cheaper alternative; the classroom assistant. This change demands a considerable increase to the staffing and professional development budgets. Facilitating the successful collaboration of two professionals in this way demands specific professional development and recruiters will need to be seeking to hire experienced co-teachers or those willing to develop their skills to become co-teachers.

Both students and parents referred to the ease of accessibility to educators as important in removing barriers to learning and this implies that the school takes this into account in terms of staffing ratios and timetable availability.

From the data I interpreted that professional learning was considered important in this school community. The welcoming inclusive community and the use of learning focussed feedback described by one student implies that professional learning had already taken place. It was not however, obvious that the optimal use of SMART learning plan goals described by a parent had taken place. The differing interpretations of inclusion also had implications for resource development namely the use of IT tools; specifically monitoring tools to track learning progress and noise reduction has implications for facility development.

The organisation and planning of adequate professional learning for the community entails the necessity of strategic planning to address inclusive practices during school development cycles if it is to be both financed and planned for.

Stakeholder interpretations: concluding comments

In conclusion there is a broadly shared interpretation of inclusion across school staff, with nuances that varied according to their role in school. The two students also shared the same interpretation as the school staff however this shared interpretation was not extended to the parents. Although there was a positive perception among the parents there were inconsistencies in understandings and expectations across the three families and indeed between family members. However, this is not surprising taking into account the diverse cultures and schooling backgrounds of the participants. These findings highlight the challenges posed to international schools in developing common understandings across diverse and ever changing school populations.

5.5 Summary of the main findings

This study has attempted to reveal how this inclusive international school removed barriers to learning for three students in its elementary school. The enquiry involved considering the learning for each of the three students who were enrolled in one of the three different levels of LS; mild, moderate or intensive.

The students were interviewed as were their educators and parents and I attended child study meetings for each student to find out what the barriers to learning were, if the school had removed them, how they knew that they had removed them and finally the implications for school

development where barriers remained. The interview and child study transcripts were analysed to identify common categories and these categories were then grouped under four main themes. Three school documents were collected to supplement the information gathered in the interviews and child study meetings. When compared the findings from the analysis of the interviews and child studies and the documentation indicated that there was a strong coincidence between the practices as reported by the participants and the rhetoric found in the analysed documentation.

The main themes that arose from the analysis and concerned removing barriers to learning were:

- Learning
- Teaching
- Inclusion
- School organisation.

The findings from this small sample indicated that the organisational aspects of the school were geared and resourced to remove barriers to learning and support the inclusion of a diverse range of learners. Inclusion had been defined and was managed to protect the inclusion balance as there was a danger that if not managed the school would become a special education school; the inclusive dimension of the school was positively marketed. A celebration and sharing of student strengths created a culture of inclusion and a sense of belonging for the students and parents interviewed. Limits to inclusion for the school had been made very real in the months before this enquiry when they had been no longer able to meet the behavioural needs of a student and keep her and her fellow peers safe. All staff interviewed acknowledged that they were not capable of removing all barriers to learning but indicated that they did try. The definition of learning, teaching for learning, and a constant focus on the learning cycle to share learning knowledge throughout the community was considered paramount in removing barriers to learning and creating an inclusive culture.

In addition to considering the barriers to learning the analysis also considered the interpretations of inclusion for the different stakeholders. While the school staff and students shared broad understandings with nuances depending on their role or experiences this could not be said for the parents. The understandings of inclusion between the parents were inconsistent. Conflicting understandings were seen in individual participants and between parents of the same family. Although this is not a surprise considering the diverse backgrounds and experiences of the parents interviewed it does highlight the challenge that international schools face if they are to develop common understandings and practices across the whole community.

The final chapter will consider the climate and conditions identified before discussing the findings with relation to the literature reviewed. The chapter will conclude by reflecting on the study; its limitations and significance to the field and offer recommendations for future research and school practice.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION, REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This final chapter will begin with a summary of the findings and consider the climate and conditions identified before discussing the findings with relation to the literature reviewed. The chapter will conclude by reflecting on the study; its limitations and significance to the field and offer recommendations for future research and school practice.

6.1 The main findings

This small-scale research considered how an international elementary school had removed barriers to learning for its international student population and sought to identify the climate and conditions that enabled the school to do this. This international school offered three levels of learning support; mild, moderate and intensive to cater for the diverse range of learning needs within its student population and one student from each of these levels was studied.

As discussed in the previous chapter the main themes then that arose from this small-scale study of how an international school removed barriers to learning for their student population were:

- Learning
- Teaching
- Inclusion
- School organisation

The climate and conditions identified

This section will address the main research question by discussing the climate and conditions identified in the school at the time of the study that enabled it to remove barriers to learning.

Climate

The findings indicate that there was a strong focus on enabling access, learning and finding solutions present in the school and each one will be discussed in turn.

A focus on enabling access

There was a continued focus on creating access; access to the school and its philosophy, access to the community, access to the curriculum, access to learning, access to extra-curricular activities and physical access to the campus. A challenge to access and removing learning barriers for all students remained the financial barriers that persist for students with more complex needs.

The school was access focused in that it had defined inclusion and considered creating access to the school and its curriculum as core business. There was a commitment to creating an inclusive school community. Access was promoted through commitment to multiculturalism and the development of student mother tongues. However, as the school had become successful as an inclusive school it had found itself in the paradoxical situation of having to manage and protect the inclusion balance to remain inclusive.

The school recruited for inclusion taking into account already qualified personnel or those that had the attitudes and competencies to develop inclusive practices to promote access. All members of the school community; educators, the leadership team, therapists, finance and marketing, and parents were expected to contribute to the inclusive climate of the school and promote access. The school in

turn acknowledged its role in creating access and was committed to the professional learning of all members of the community. Board members were appointed to enhance the school vision and mission and strategic, long-term planning had been crucial to the development of the inclusive mission and vision.

Playground space was designed to respect student needs and give them opportunities to use their recess time in ways which suited their moods and their needs.

A focus on learning

A learning culture had been developed through the definition of learning and an increase in the understanding of what learning was and how to facilitate it across the school community to remove barriers to learning. Learning was core business and well communicated by means of the school vision and there existed a focus on recruiting people into the team to enhance this vision. The learning culture was nurtured through valuing and providing professional learning for the whole community. According to the head of elementary LS the learning culture also ensured that learning was monitored so that shifts in learning success could be identified.

The identification and celebration of student learning was witnessed during the child study meetings and pieces of the learning puzzle were described as coming together in these meetings. A collaborative process of teachers working together to remove learning barriers was observed. For one student, learning was considered by the team in terms of the student having understood and taken control over her learning so that she understood what contributed to learning success for her. It was reported that empowered learners developed deeper meanings, saw learning connections, used individual skills and learned strategies to enhance their learning and strategies were employed to guide learners in making choices when cognitively engaged.

Based on his analysis of the inclusion debate Kavale (2000) argued that the change of emphasis from the remediation of deficits to a focus on learning yielded most success for all students. A major focus on learning enabled this school to break down barriers to learning and create a climate of inclusion. Learning was core business, was strategically planned for across the school community and linked to school development.

Learning was seen to be a common theme in conversations, interviews and documentation. Data on learning; both hard and soft data was monitored, collected and provided the evidence to inform school development. A focus on the metacognitive processes of learning contributed to the development of learners who were independent and could self-advocate in that they were both articulate and empowered by their learning. An emphasis on the social and emotional aspects of learning further empowered learners.

At the teaching level the learning focus extended to the implementation of collaborative teaching, differentiation and assessment for learning. Teaching to individual profiles as opposed to labels facilitated the learning process where teachers had high expectations of students, strengths were recognised and difficulties and barriers circumvented. The community was expected according to the findings to create the optimum climate for learning which was considered to be safe, collaborative, welcoming and open.

At the organisational level learning was considered in terms of student learning which took into account the curriculum and student learning profiles. Adult learning encompassed professional development for the whole community and appraisal for school staff.

A focus on finding solutions

It was recognised by the school that inclusion was hard work and solutions needed to be sought when challenges arose, a can do attitude was felt to be essential and out of the box thinking to find solutions to difficult questions and situations were sought. When students encounter difficulty, teachers 'create the condition for inclusive education to flourish' (Florian and Kershner, 2009, p.175).

Collaboration to find solutions within the organisation through parents, students and staff was supplemented by the school looking outwards to find solutions. The school looked to its whole community for solutions to removing barriers to learning; parent knowledge on behavioural therapies, collaborative learning across the organisation, the implementation of Peace Patrol®, as explained earlier where students negotiated playground issues and arguments. Outward looking solutions involved entrepreneurship so that working partnerships and collaboration with outside organisations enabled the school to find solutions for therapies, knowledge and finance. This focus on finding solutions involved long-term strategy planning with a focus on resources, finances, recruitment and succession.

Conditions

The conditions in the school that enhanced the inclusive nature of the school were found to be the space and the resources.

The space

Space was considered in terms of space and time. Strategic planning took into account both of these to maintain the inclusive culture of the school. Space to enhance inclusion included library space for inclusive literature, playground space to meet a range of choices including quiet areas, and multisensory room space.

Inclusive approaches are time sensitive and a crucial factor to take into account when facilitating inclusion. In this context co-teaching required not only adequate levels of staffing but timetable and space considerations. The implication of timetabling for students in two homerooms; special education and mainstream and attendance at regular therapy and hospital appointments should not be underestimated.

The resources

I have considered the resources for inclusion in terms of the resources at the level of school organisation such as the human elements, the therapies, the policies and procedures, the curriculum and the facilities. The human elements include the staff, the parents and the school board. Curriculum resources at the classroom teaching level such as classroom materials and technology were not considered.

International schools are usually independent and decisions on school fees and how to spend them lie with the school. In this school the resources to meet the needs of students with intensive learning needs were in place and long-term financial planning had been necessary to develop the resources

to the levels required. The majority of international schools including this one have developed inclusion according to a model of funding that is dependent upon employers paying the schools fees and parents negotiating school packages on taking up international posts. However, financial barriers to access and learning remain for those families whose employers will not take up, or share the financial responsibility and this situation remained a challenge to the inclusive rhetoric of the school.

School policies and procedures were designed to enhance inclusion and create coherence across the early childhood centre, the elementary, middle and the high school.

Staffing for inclusion involved recruiting educators into the organisation who were able to promote and facilitate inclusion or those willing to develop. Professional development was provided not only to educators but to the whole school community and included non-teaching staff, students, parents and board members. Professional learning was offered not only by external providers but by members of the community. Board members were selected for their shared vision and ability to be critical friends. Parents were involved and their skills were recognised and used to enhance the inclusive nature of the school.

The curriculum had been developed by the school to enhance inclusion and remove barriers to learning. It was claimed that it was learning focused and concept based.

The facilities were accessible in terms of both the building and movement around the campus. The special education classroom had direct access to bathroom facilities and a sensory room which included soft seating, a swing and an individual trampoline.

The therapies in place at the time of data collection were S< and OT. Collaboration with an occupational therapy practice in London had facilitated the creation of a satellite clinic on campus when the usual strategies to find and employ occupational therapists had failed.

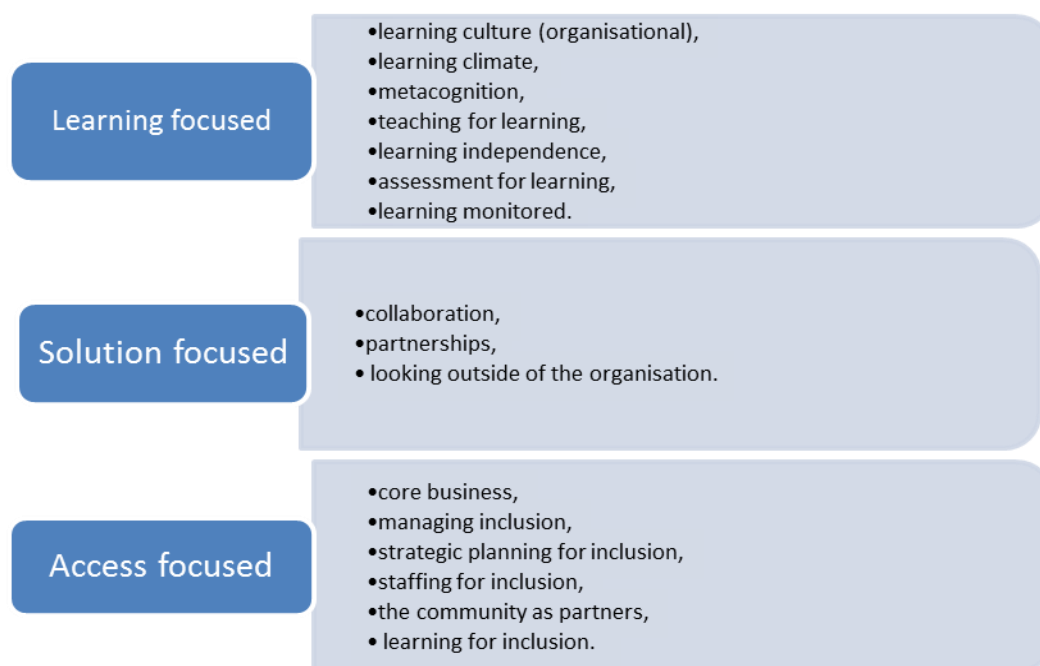
6.2 Conclusion

The research carried out in the elementary school indicated that inclusion was pervasive across the school and a strategic initiative at the level of school organisation. A focus on learning existed across the school community and teaching was focused on empowering learners and creating a climate that fostered learning. Inclusion in this school had been defined and was managed and the limits to inclusion were understood and shared with the school community. A focus of looking for solutions when learning barriers were met was encountered in the SMT and the educators interviewed. Increasing access and participation was considered at all levels of the organisation and geared to providing the climate and conditions to remove barriers to learning for a diverse range of learners. The findings indicate that a focus on learning, finding solutions and creating access were the enabling factors in removing barriers to learning in this school at the time of data collection.

By regrouping the analytical categories to consider the climate and conditions identified in the school, three main areas of focus emerged that I argue enabled this school to respond to diverse needs.

Table 6.1

Considering the climate and conditions: three main areas of focus that enabled this school to respond to diverse needs



The findings indicate that inclusion is a process and bound up in a proactive, dynamic, continuous cycle where a focus on solution seeking, learning and access drives the cycle. The success of the journey in the context of the school studied had been one of small cumulative steps with the cycle becoming progressively more complex and the inclusion story becoming richer as new knowledge was added.

6.3 The literature review and its relationship to the findings

There was great coincidence with the practices found in the school and the literature reviewed with one difference which has implications for the development of inclusive international schools. In opposition to the position that many international schools find themselves in; that of a high turnover of staff and school leaders (Blandford and Shaw, 2001) this school had a low turnover of school leaders and staff which according to the senior leader had led to sustainability in both policy making and practice which had facilitated the development of inclusion.

Inclusive education – a definition

I proposed the definition of inclusion put forward by Slee (2000, cited by Rayner 2007, p.36) as being particularly suited to the context of international schools and their multicultural and multilingual populations. This definition embraces a wide understanding of the term inclusion to incorporate 'race, ethnicity, sexuality' (p.36) and evidence was found that this definition was appropriate to this school situation. At the time of the study there were 70 different nationalities represented in the

whole school population. The elementary library collection reflected this wider understanding with books, including picture books dealing with race, ethnicity, sexuality and disability on the shelves.

The definition of inclusion; 'managing a number of student needs successfully' employed by the school reflected the operational and organisational challenges to successful inclusive schools; that of becoming special education schools if numbers are not managed and the inclusion balance not protected.

International schools and inclusion

A small-scale piece of research carried out by Bradley (2000) considered the challenges of implementing inclusive education in an international school and the findings from this study mostly coincided with her findings however this study did not find evidence of opposition from the community. This difference is possibly explained by the fact that in this enquiry the parents, due to the school's marketing strategies would have been aware of the inclusive nature of the school when deciding to enrol their children. The marketing manager had commented that the inclusive nature of the school was the school's niche in the market.

The curriculum developed by the school was according to the senior leader standards based and drawn from educational research and best practice. It is claimed to be grounded in an international knowledge base and aimed at developing independent learners and international citizens (An introduction to the elementary school – The ISX curriculum). The creation of independent learners agrees with arguments by Skidmore (2004) that curriculum development should be to develop independent learners capable of making choices and being able to take 'an active part in the collective task of knowledge production' (p.124). The learning focused school-developed curriculum designed to provide the tools for learning and develop an understanding of the learning process coincided with arguments made by Skidmore (2004) for a reconceptualization of the curriculum.

Leading and Managing International Schools

While Blandford and Shaw (2001) had commented on the extra layers of complexity found in the international school sector, a member of the SMT had described the sector as free from national, political decision-making and under-resourcing. Other positive comments referred to the opportunities and interesting challenges created by the diverse, multilingual population, the privileged workplace characterised by incredibly caring parents and the great colleagues dedicated to the school's philosophy. National labour laws and the high social charges incurred when hiring staff were however considered a challenge.

Contrary to the position that many international schools find themselves in (Blandford and Shaw, 2001) the low turnover of school leaders in this school had led to sustainability in both policy making and practice. In 2011 the National Association of International Schools (NAIS) referred to the school as a 'school of the future' with 'a strong reputation for stability and the report specifically mentioned board continuity, school leadership, and enrolment trends and reported that the school had been capably governed and well-led over a substantial period of time. A senior administrator had reported that to facilitate long-term thinking, planning and sustainability board members were selected for their commitment to distributed leadership and the inclusive vision and mission of the school.

The challenge of achieving equity, efficacy and efficiency in the context of performance-related target setting and league tables which according to Rayner (2007) is a challenge to inclusive schools

had been offset in this context with the school taking advantage of a niche in the market, that of inclusive schooling.

While school fees included LS provision for students in mild and moderate levels of support, intensive levels of support were not covered in the school fees and this remains a huge barrier to learning for this group of students. The head of LS claimed to work hard with parents to find funding and through letters to employers, governments, insurance companies and a range of organisations funding was secured for individual students wherever possible. The head of LS stated that 'If people are being moved around the world then companies or governments should take some responsibility'.

The challenges facing internationally mobile pupils

As previously discussed internationally mobile students encounter a range of challenges such as accommodating new languages, new cultures, new homes, new schools, new curricula, and new expectations upon them. The findings indicated that the school understood and worked hard at creating a sense of belonging for all of the students and this was articulated by the student receiving mild levels of support when he referred to his first days at the school.

The development of the language of instruction (English) was given priority and provided for through an English Language Development Programme geared to student needs. English language learning was organised on varying levels of support so that 'interaction with peers is an important part of language learning, so students are included in mainstream classes at all levels' (-English Language Development – An introduction to the Elementary School').

A discourse of inclusion

A discourse of inclusion (Skidmore, 2004) was identified as being present in the school and there was concurrence with the five proposed dimensions; 'the educability of students, the explanation of educational failure, the school response, the theory of teaching expertise, and the curriculum model'. (p.113). The discourse (Skidmore, 2004) encountered referred to not only the vocabulary used by the educators but to the 'underlying grammar of reasoning' (p.112). A belief that all students had an open-ended potential for learning was commonly encountered and this was articulated by the elementary school head, 'We believe in providing access and opportunity, not setting ceilings'. A learning culture that embedded metacognitive practices for all students was central to the school pedagogy. Expertise involved supporting the participation of all students and the whole school community in the learning process. The curriculum had been developed by the school to facilitate its inclusive mission and was grounded in an international knowledge base and aimed at developing independent learners and international citizens.

The language used in the school brochure 'Learning support at ISX' demonstrated the discourse of inclusion; 'diversity as a strength, understand their own learning profile, ability to self-advocate, use student strengths to overcome weaknesses, differentiated instruction to provide access'.

The content of the ILP reflected the discourse of inclusion however the format reflected a medical deficit model of learners and learning as student strengths and interests did not appear until the third page.

Terminology – SEN or learning support?

In this study the term SEN was not encountered in either speech or narrative during the school visits. Narratives and terms were focused on learning and thus the terms learning support, barriers to learning, Individual Learning Plan were the terms encountered.

Models of disability

The findings indicate that the school reflected a social model of disability using the term barriers to learning. As previously discussed the staff and students shared a broad understanding of the social model of disability which recognises that changes to learning environment and the removal of barriers to learning positively affect learning outcomes. School development was geared to removing barriers to learning for the students. The parents shared inconsistent understandings of the social model of disability which indicated that the school should continue in its drive to develop common understandings across the school community.

In addition to the social model the findings indicated that the school, particularly the special education unit, also reflected the critical realistic perspective proposed by Shakespeare (2009). In this model the context and the complexity of the 'disability experience' (p.186) is recognised. The educators took on the medical and psychological experiences of the students to better understand the consequences of these experiences on their learning and their personal attitudes and motivation. Through understanding themselves as learners and being able to articulate their needs through self-advocacy, students in this study could be considered better prepared to face external realities and explore the complexity of the 'disability experience' (p.190).

The findings indicated that student empowerment, and self-advocacy were considered important by the school and developed in their students. The students receiving support for learning were felt to be particularly good at understanding and articulating their individual needs and thus supported educators in understanding their learning experiences and removing barriers to learning.

Approaches, strategies and classroom intervention to support inclusion

The focus on learning, the learning process, self-advocacy, and the professional development work on differentiation with educators identified in the school coincided with the continua of approaches proposed by Lewis and Norwich (2005).

Through accessing expertise and disseminating expert knowledge into the school community the school continued to develop their ability to remove barriers to learning and consider a greater range of students to be within their expertise (Florian and Kershner, 2009). The elementary school however had recently experienced their limit to inclusion when all attempts to meet the needs of student with complex issues and increasingly aggressive behaviours had failed. Limitations to inclusion were reported and documented (Learning support at ISX – how do we make admissions decision?) as when success could not be ensured for those students with 'emotional and behavioural disorders'

Inclusive pedagogies

Nind and Wearmouth (2005) proposed three principles of an inclusive pedagogy ; the setting of suitable learning challenges, responding to diverse learning needs, and overcoming barriers to learning and assessment. These principles were reflected in the findings of this study and coincided with the development of academic attainment, social involvement, and improved behaviour.

Identified by Rayner (2007) and in place according to the findings was an understanding of the role of personal learning differences on learning, differential pedagogy, the assessment data to inform the learning process and attention to the metacognitive processes and strategies of learning. Also indicated by the participants was the existence of professional development in the area of differential and inclusive pedagogy.

Jordan (2005) argued that best practices for students on the autistic spectrum were applicable for students in the mainstream. Strategies observed in the mainstream classroom, to assess attention and understanding were claimed by the class teacher not to be specific to the student in intensive levels of support but appropriate to all students.

Transformability

The findings coincided with the model of teaching for transformability proposed by Hart (2004) where needs were supported, perspectives sought and respected, qualities valued and nurtured, learning progress supported, multiple opportunities to succeed were facilitated and best futures secured. Teaching for transformability is claimed (Hart, 2004) to enhance learning capacity by teaching in the 'affective domain, the social domain and the cognitive domain' (p.173). Findings indicate that teaching in each of these domains is a feature of the school and a senior administrator considered the removal of social barriers enabled students to have 'sense making' conversations with everyone stating that 'remove social and emotional barriers then give them the tools to remove cognitive barriers'.

Transformability (Hart, 2004) in this study context was translated into practice through the principle of everybody working together to guide decision-making and enhance learning through empowering both the teacher and the student.

Sociocultural perspectives

As discussed in the literature review the sociocultural perspective of education and the work of Vygotsky (1978, cited by Skidmore 2007, p.122) are often referred to in international literature and school documentation and the school where this study took place was no exception. In this section I will refer to the school practice that appeared to coincide with sociocultural learning however, I cannot fully claim that the school was using sociocultural practices as I did not employ the appropriate methodologies.

Florian and Kershner (2009) proposed that schools should adopt a sociocultural view of learning where 'knowledge develops through shared activity in social contexts' (p.175). The senior administrator argued that social barriers limited students to having conversations with those pupils who struggled as much as they did. Success lay, he reported in first removing social and emotional barriers and then giving students the tools to remove cognitive barriers.

Florian and Kershner (2009) proposed that a sociocultural perspective on inclusive pedagogy included strategic processes that supported the process of learning and motivation. The head of LS considered that learning barrier removal had involved them developing their own understandings of what learning was and the vision of who could be included in this vision. This in turn had demanded an understanding of their role and their ability to remove barriers through the process of learning.

Open questioning observed in the classroom was designed to structure student enquiry (Elementary school brochure: 'What does learning look like in the Elementary School?'). This approach to student enquiry coincides with the work of Tharp and Gallimore (1988) who advocate for joint product activity which incorporates the use of instructional conversation where open questions are designed to adopt deep thinking and responses are designed to stimulate reflection and dialogue.

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978) was understood and used by the school in written documentation and commented upon in interviews both directly and indirectly. One administrator referred to the ZPD directly when discussing the vital balance between learning, stress and a student's ZPD.

There is an indication that the dynamic assessment techniques proposed by Valenzuela (2007) are used and assessment tasks according to school documentation were designed to allow students to demonstrate their levels of understanding through collaborative research and presentation of their work to their peers (Elementary school brochure: What does learning look like in the Elementary School?) however, further evidence would need to be collected to fully confirm that dynamic assessment as described by Valenzuela (2007) is a strong feature of the assessment culture. Dynamic assessment involves interactive, formal and informal techniques that focus on the learning process across all ages, all curricular foci, and includes language development and problem solving (Valenzuela, 2007).

Effective schooling and inclusion

A common mission, a learning focused climate and effective teaching and learning for all students are strategies that have been named (James et al 2006) as strategies to support teaching and learning in inclusive classrooms. The findings confirm that these strategies were present in this study.

The senior administrator in this enquiry commented that international schools were a no excuse sector in that it was not necessary to bow to governmental interference. Schools were also free to focus on learning and metacognition and this coincided with the claims made by Rayner (2007) that inclusive schools could be considered to be effective as they are 'grounded in an ideal of education reform, change and school improvement (just not always the version promoted by the government of England)'. A plea made by Rayner (2007) to locate 'work in the arena of assessment, learning and growth' (p.107) further coincided with findings from this study.

Managing Inclusion and Leadership for Inclusion

Reflected in the studied school is the social justice framework (Shepherd and Hasazi, 2007) where 'all students have access to equal opportunities and outcomes that will in turn lead to full citizenship and actualisation of their full potential' (p.476). The operationalisation approaches of the framework mostly agreed with the operational approaches identified in this study which were promoting effective instructional practices, creating professional learning communities that collaborate, reflect and empower, and ensuring that the whole school community are at the heart of the school.

While the school has operationalised many aspects of the framework (Shepherd and Hasazi, 2007) such as understanding their role as moral leaders, offering multicultural education, instructional leadership, democratic discourse, community engagement, and have the strategies in place to construct shared understandings there does remain one outstanding operational approach that of

including all. Students with complex learning needs were required to pay additional school fees and for many students on the international circuit these fees are prohibitive. The school had also reached its limits to inclusion when it had been unable to continue to include a student whose behaviour had put herself and her peers in danger.

Summarising the literature review and its relationship to the findings

The climate and conditions for creating inclusive international schools appear to be little different to those of national schools but there are aspects particular to the leadership and management of international schools, namely the rapid turnover of staff (Blandford and Shaw, 2001) that adversely affect the development of inclusion.

A strategy not considered in the literature review but identified in this study to be instrumental to removing barriers to learning was the use of collaborative teaching. Implementing this strategy does however have considerable implications for staffing ratios, educator recruitment, staff development and financing.

6.4 Choices, limitations and significance of the study

Considering choices made during the study

Allan and Slee (2008) point out that research involves making decisions; a complex, messy business, fraught with uncertainty. Would the findings have been the same if I had chosen a different school, different students, and a different methodology? What if I had been a different researcher with different experiences, from a different culture with a different language; would I have made sense of the data in the same way? My own experiences will have coloured the interpretation of the data, add this to the question of the small size of the study and we can conclude that these findings cannot be generalised to other populations. Yin (2009) however has argued that case studies although providing little basis for scientific generalisations 'are generalisable to theoretical propositions' (p.15). The results of my choices then do not provide a 'scientific' sample but are concerned with illuminating practice.

Limitations of the study

A limitation of this study is the very small scale; three students in one elementary school in one international school using one methodological approach.

Grounded theory uses a constant comparative approach and with only one round of interviews the constant comparative nature of the method was compromised. The analysis started after the interviews had taken place, ideally it should have been taking place during multiple rounds of interviews. There was no opportunity to probe further, follow up and little opportunity to clarify that the perspectives of the participants had been fully understood.

I acknowledge that due to the unexpected time taken to complete the analysis the use of the data base NVivo would have strengthened the analysis. What I didn't know when I made the decision not to use it was that I would return to full-time employment during the analysis stage. Long periods of concentrated study time became intermittent, short periods of study and the time envisioned to complete the analysis and write up the research was extended. The challenge of recalling events and locating the stored data increased as time went on. Data and ideas would I believe would have been better managed, there would have been a better overview of the data and the ability to produce

models and report from and query the data would have been less complicated, more efficient and therefore more rigorous (Bazeley, 2007).

Significance of the research

There is little research in this area of international education and this study is significant in that although it does not offer results that can be generalised and immediately put into place it does offer international school leaders with a little more research-based evidence on which to consider how they might develop inclusive education in their context. It is hoped that the results will stimulate further research in the area so that this work becomes part of a bigger body of research that better reflects the range of international school contexts.

6.5 Recommendations

Research recommendations

As there had been little research in this area there is great scope and need to increase this knowledge base. This study has looked at only three primary-age students in one international school and it is acknowledged that these findings reflect a snapshot of this school taken by this researcher at a particular time in the development of the school and the researcher. A large mixed method design to compare, contrast and test these results is suggested.

When more research has been carried out it would be possible through comparative studies to answer the questions I posed when considering the choices I made in this study. Would the findings have been the same if I had chosen a different school, different students, and a different methodology? What if I had been a different researcher with different experiences, from a different culture with a different language; would I have made sense of the data in the same way?

From the little evidence collected, the students appeared to place a high value on the social aspects of inclusion directly referring to learning with their peers and the importance of being welcomed and belonging to the school community. Taking into account the transient nature of the school population and the consequences for disrupting student's patterns of friendship this is an aspect that should be more fully addressed in future research.

The discourse of inclusion (Skidmore 2004) was identified amongst teachers in this school and from my limited discussions with students I propose that this discourse might also have been present in the student population. I suggest further research in this area to assess if this is true and how it might contribute to developing the climate and conditions to support learning in a diverse population of students.

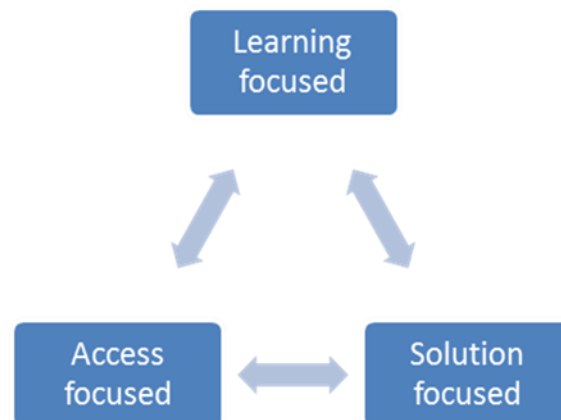
More research is warranted into the adjustments favoured by parents, especially those that require investments such as training and staffing. Inclusive provision will need to be kept under review, since it has to develop in response to the varying needs of the student population over time. Parents are crucial in better understanding the needs of the student population and future research may indicate the need to make up-front investments to avert the necessity of a later expensive 'bolt-on'.

Recommendations for school practice

I recommend, based on the findings from this study that international schools locate the development of inclusion in the arena of whole school development and recognise that it is a process bound up in a proactive, dynamic, continuous cycle see Figure 6.3 where the cycle is driven

by a focus on solution seeking, learning and access. I propose that the cycle should be thought of in a three dimensional state as a spring which represents the increasing complexity of the cycle and takes into account the natural tensions and challenges of the inclusion journey. This cycle exists in an environment where there is a strong discourse of inclusion (Skidmore, 2004).

Figure 6.2 A developmental inclusion cycle



Long-term strategic planning and policy making aimed at creating pervasive cultures of learning and inclusion will help ensure that knowledge and experience is captured when senior leaders and board members move on.

Funding remains a major barrier to learning for many students and a major challenge for international schools in developing truly inclusive schools. This school was no exception and as commented by an SMT member ‘attaching a monetary value to learning support is itself a barrier to learning’. Charging higher school fees for groups of students based on their disabilities or abilities poses serious barriers to learning for these students. A fully inclusive school reinforcing the social model of disability would, I suggest share the extra costs across the whole school community. When funding structures reflect the social model of disability and this major barrier to access and participation is removed then international schools will be entitled to claim that they are inclusive.

6.6 Professional insights

New professional insights

In my professional role, I lead a large international organization in its efforts to promote and enable fair access for all students to high-quality education. This research confirmed the need to move the organisation’s internal and external discourse from ‘special educational needs’ (with its associated labels and low expectations) toward ‘strength-based learning’. When attending workshops and giving presentations in different parts of the world, it became apparent that international schools do

not understand the term *Special Educational Needs (SEN)* in the same way, sowing confusion for teachers, students, parents and the larger community. My research helped to frame new ways of talking about access in my role. For example, new documents refer to all learners using the term 'learner variability'—a concept that acknowledges recent research in the field and makes the essential point that brain networks are variable, and not fixed (Rose, Rouhani, and Fischer 2013). From there, the idea of teaching to variability allowed us to broaden the conversation and introduce Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Professional insights in the use of UDL in our community of schools will increase in spring 2016 when the findings of a study, commissioned as part of my work, are released. That study, focusing on the use of UDL in international schools, will enrich learning and inform educational policy and practice right across an independent community of more than 4,000 schools.

While this research began with my understanding of inclusion from a UK and Dutch perspective, it prompted a broader view that extended to North American and international school perspectives as the study developed. My professional responsibilities informed and were informed by a quest to understand a wide range of contexts in which schools are working (and the consequent legal requirements). The research thus enabled me to address a broader spectrum of educational and political contexts in my work. The understanding of individual school contexts will remain important since over 50% of the school in the community are publically-funded, and obliged to honour multiple legal requirements and cultural mores. This professional reality helped to frame my inquiry (and helped me respond to that reality). Such wide-ranging contexts pushed me to consider the ways in which schools are organised and resourced, their cultures and policies, their approaches to teaching and learning, the physical aspects of their buildings and the ways in which individuals within the school community interact with each other.

Students with learning needs, I have learned, are the thin end of a wedge to a much wider (and even potentially more contentious) discussion. For many international schools, the challenges to developing inclusion encompass exclusionary attitudes and practices regarding gender and culture. Legal and cultural frameworks throw up barriers to inclusive teaching and learning, and the journey toward eliminating these impediments remains a challenge for the organisation, teachers and schools within the community. Much work also remains in schools where the development of inclusion is considered an unacceptable challenge in the race to the top of the performance tables and marketability.

Knowledge and skills gained during the EdD has equipped me to write and evaluate 'Requests for Proposals' (RFPs) and collaborate with research teams during research that is aimed at furthering the understanding of the organisation in international and inclusive education. The importance of collecting data from a range of perspectives and using a range of methods to inform action was gained during the EdD. This knowledge enables me to work with the research team in designing surveys to increase organisational understandings of school contexts, gauge the individual needs of the schools, and plan for and develop support materials. Data collected from the research commissioned as part of my role led to the development of a guide to support schools leaders in developing inclusive practices for their particular contexts.

The understanding of the process of carrying out a literature review and the knowledge gained about the research process (as well as the specific academic domain of inclusive, international

education) serves me daily as I review literature on inclusive education in an effort to remain current in my knowledge. Feedback from schools and external specialists suggests that the materials which I am responsible for being developing are effectively supporting schools as they develop inclusion in their own contexts.

The intellectual and practical skills gained from the EdD programme contribute on a daily basis to my work. To develop the understandings of educators and school leaders, I am responsible for developing policy, implementing strategic change, writing, presenting, training and facilitating inclusive education and support for learning. In this highly collaborative role, I contribute during the development and update of programme guides and further create teacher and school leadership support materials to support the development of inclusive educational practices. Under my leadership—and informed directly by my studies—the organisation has published a guide (and supporting self-review tool) for inclusive education, learning stories (small, focused studies of inclusive practice at the school level) and films. These resources now support schools in developing strategies to increase access and participation.

Research methodology and the synthetic thinking required in my doctoral studies have informed my work in concrete ways. The guide to inclusive education was reviewed by external specialists before collaboration with the translation and publication departments to publish in 2015 in five languages (English, French, Spanish, Arabic and Chinese) for the school community. The resource and self-review tool (designed to facilitate inclusive school development) is aimed at increasing awareness and knowledge in the field of inclusive education through provoking discussion, reflection and inquiry. My academic research helped me to clarify my own educational philosophy and praxis around a few key areas: the pervasive nature of access and participation, the major role of senior leadership, the centrality of learning through seeking solutions. This new lexicon of understanding influenced my decision to develop provocations toward inclusion rather than prescriptive advice. The provocations (in the form of questions to prompt meaningful reflection and action in international schools) are aimed particularly at pedagogical leaders—the people in schools who have the power to bring about systemic, culturally-responsive change. Anecdotal evidence, much more than prescription or argumentation, provides non-specialist with entry points for non-threatening but ultimately persuasive discussions which can themselves model inclusion.

The findings from this EdD research highlighted the collaborative nature of inclusive school practice. These conclusions influenced the ways in which I have worked to develop collaborative spaces within the professional workspace—and with the teachers and school leaders that form the community. We created a virtual collaborative space which invites internal and external specialists and practitioners to collaborate, share practice and reflect as they develop inclusion in their contexts.

The EdD research unit highlighted how intellectual projects produce literature to inform practice. This knowledge prompted me to consider the needs of the audience and the most appropriate formats for production. In professional work products, I have (for example) used a series of questions and answers as a strategy for developing common understandings and approaches designed to promote access and participation across an incredibly diverse community. In my most recent publication, a knowledge-for-action document offers practical applications to develop and improve practice, building on a previous stance of knowledge-for-understanding. The document has

been designed to clarify and develop organizational definitions of inclusion: who the learners are, what the barriers to learning are, and which reflective questions can be used to support the development of policy and learning plans. Resources proposed include those developed collaboratively within the community such as the organisation's philosophical principles of an inclusive education, the principles of teaching and assessment for inclusive learning, strategies for meeting student learning diversity in the classroom, and high-level statements about teaching for inclusion in general programme literature.

Learning how to learn- a personal journey of learning through research

The skills and challenges of learning encountered during the EdD research are foremost in my mind as I contribute to the publication of teacher support materials. These learning experiences include the challenges of developing critical reading and writing skills, the affective challenges of learning from feedback and peer review and (equally essential) the development of resilience and discipline. The materials produced highlight the need for educators and school leaders to create learning climates that nurture and foster learning progress in their students.

Recent professional experience took me to school in an area of the world where it is regarded shameful to have a disabled child. The (understandable) behaviour of her parents—deciding not to share important information about a child with her teachers—became a barrier to learning. (Ineffective communication between parents and schools is a familiar problem for schools seeking to develop an inclusive educational environment, but this scenario is not part of public dialogue about inclusion in Anglo-European contexts.) This incident highlights the fact that it is crucial for multicultural research into barriers to learning to continue, if international schools are to develop inclusive learning communities. Developing inclusive education in international schools is going to involve challenges to entrenched cultural expectations, power structures and values. My own limited horizons must continue to be challenged as well, in professional reflection that invites me to self-critical analysis and to make connections that can give me courage to explore barriers to my own learning. For example, while professional dialogue, academic research and political activism for neuro-diversity may be at the forefront of my own thinking, there are many specific cultural contexts (and more generally human feelings about difference) that exist in an entirely different frame of reference.

The learning curve during the research process remains high, and although there has to be a moment when this particular research comes to a reasonable end, the great privilege of advanced independent academic inquiry gives me new personal and professional responsibilities: to continue to develop lines of enquiry, and to connect ever-widening streams of research emergent in the field. I am more equipped and empowered to make discerning judgments about the technical, philosophical and practical value of scholars working in the field of inclusive education. I am better able to identify my own blind spots and prejudices, and to identify my own areas for growth/limitations of understanding—as well as some of the more challenging positions held by the organization in which I work.

For example, if I were today starting this research project, I would include the work that has been carried out and continues to develop on Universal Design for Learning (UDL). I would also focus more on students identified with learning disabilities who are learning in a language other than their mother tongue. While there has been much research on the acquisition of second language (and the majority of international schools have language learning programmes in place), we do not yet really understand effective strategies and approaches for linguistic inclusion; moreover, in practice, a

student-centred or individual-learner focused approach might begin to question boundaries between linguistic and learning diversity. In this organisation, multilingualism is considered a right, and all students are expected to develop at least two languages. What does that mean for students with access requirements? Why are inclusive assessment arrangements available for students with specific learning needs, but not for learners who function in a language that is not their first or best?

Contribution to the understanding of other leaders in the field of international education

Spurred on by the lack of research to support the development of inclusive practices in international schools this study had set out to discover the implications for school organisation and development in removing barriers to learning for a group of students. The findings indicate that inclusion is a process and bound up in a proactive, dynamic, continuous cycle where a focus on solution seeking, learning and access drives the cycle. The success of the journey in the context of the school studied had been one of small cumulative steps with the cycle becoming progressively more complex and richer as new knowledge was added. The process was reassuringly described as having involved small baby steps.

However, this school was different to many international schools in that it had experienced a committed, stable management structure over a long period of time. Maintaining the developmental of a proactive, dynamic, continuous cycle focussed on inclusion in the wake of new administrators, educators and initiatives is a major challenge for any school. This study highlights that a commitment to increasing access and participation in the international school context will necessitate a concerted and explicit effort to ensure that the vision, policies, practices and discourses are pervasive across the school community; so pervasive that they are not easily changed or lost when members of the community leave.

Presenting the findings from this research in conferences, (Alliance for International Education), journals and professional networks will stimulate discussion on further research to increase the limited research base, will offer opportunities for reflection and contribute to the developing understanding of the field. International school leaders are looking to research to inform them of successful practices specific to their contexts and a solid research base is crucial if international schools are to increase access and participation.

6.7 Concluding thoughts – inclusion as a developmental project

If 'inclusion' is to be successful these findings indicate that it has to be pervasive across the school implying long term strategic planning and processes and recognised as a developmental project. I acknowledge the claims made by Allan (2008) that schools need to attend to issues at all levels of the organisation and consider and initiate changes and provide the accompanying learning if success is to be achieved. I propose that the incorporation of the developmental inclusion cycle into the school development process along with changes to funding will support continued momentum and inclusive development at all levels of the organisation. A 'pragmatic' (Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou, 2010, p.33,) approach as explained by Armstrong et al. recognises the balancing act of what is achievable now and what is desirable and needs to be planned for. Fuelled by a discourse of inclusion (Skidmore, 2004) schools will be empowered to create a sense of belonging for all students knowing that attention to issues of access and learning in a climate of solution seeking will facilitate the inclusion journey. This journey will see international schools enrich their school populations by providing access to a diverse range of learners, increasing the depth of both personal and organisational learning, acknowledging student voice so that participation rather than 'something

that is done to' students (Allan, 2008 p.33) prevails and finally creating a sense of belonging and hope to those students searching for a place to fulfil their potential.

It has been my intention to add to the small body of research that exists within the context of inclusive international schooling and support those colleagues struggling with developing more inclusive approaches within their organisations. The aim of this research then was to identify the climate and the conditions in an international school that contributed to the removal of barriers to learning and respond to diverse learning needs. It is hoped that these findings will have illuminated how this school had responded to the diverse needs of its learning population and will support international schools in the area of school development as they begin, or continue on their inclusion journey.

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APPENDIX 1: Interview Questions

Questions for the pupil interviews

Introduction questions and initial open-ended questions

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. Whose class are you in?
4. What nationality are you?
5. What is your mother tongue?
6. How many languages do you speak?
7. This is an international school have you attended any others and where?
8. Have you lived in any other countries?
9. What was your favourite country to live in and why?
10. Which countries do you like to visit and why?
11. Do you have a hobby?
12. What do you like doing best in the weekend and holidays?
13. What do you like doing at school?

Intermediate questions

1. What are your strengths, what are you good at?
2. What do you like about school?
3. What don't you like about school?
4. What are the names of your friends are they attending this school?
5. What do you find difficult to do at school?/Is school work always challenging?
6. Do you get help when you 'get stuck' and need help?/What happens when school work is too easy?
7. Who helps?
8. How do they help you?
9. How often do they support you?
10. Does this help?

11. Do your classmates/friends help you?
12. How do they do this?
13. How does the school help you?

Ending questions

1. Who helps you at home with homework?
2. How do they help you?
3. If you could choose the help that school gives you what would it be?
4. How could friends help you?
5. What advice would you give to the school to support you?

Questions for the parent interviews

Initial open ended questions

1. What sort of boy/girl is A?
2. What does he/she like doing best?
3. What does he/she dislike?

Intermediate questions

1. What are A's strengths?
2. What do you see as his/her weakness?
3. What hinders A from learning?
4. Do you think that this affects him at home?
5. How does this affect him/her at play?
6. How does this affect him/her at school?
7. What are the hardest barriers to overcome at school?
8. How is the school supporting him/her?
9. Does A need support out of school?
10. How is this organised?

Ending questions

1. Are you involved in A's learning at school?

2. How does this work?
3. If you could choose how best to support A's learning in school how would you do it?
4. How do you support A's learning in the home/family?
5. How does A like to relax?
6. Is there anything that you think that I have missed that is important to this study?

Questions for the teacher interviews

Initial open ended

1. Tell me about A?
2. What does he/she like doing best?
3. What does he/she dislike?

Intermediate questions

4. What are A's strengths?
5. What does he/she do particularly well at?
6. What does he/she struggle with?
7. What are the barriers to his learning?
8. How are these barriers being removed?
9. What is your role in removing barriers?
10. What is the role of the school in removing barriers?
11. Who else is involved in removing barriers?

Ending questions

1. Will it be possible to remove all barriers?
2. Where barriers remain what are the implications for further school development?

Management questions

1. Do you feel that you are successful at removing barriers to learning for all of your pupils?
2. How does the school remove barriers to learning?
3. How do you know that the barriers have been removed?

4. Where barriers remain what are the implications for further school development?

Thank you so much for your time. I will send you a copy of the transcript, please contact me if you find anything that needs correcting?

Jayne Pletser

vjd.pletser@planet.nl

Appendix 2: Letter of introduction and informed consent

Title of Project

Removing barriers to learning, enabling international schools to respond to diverse needs:
identifying the climate and conditions

Investigator

Jayne Pletser, research student EdD, at the University of Bath UK

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A brief description of the project

Personal experience in international school leadership, learning support coordination, and teaching informs me that international schools find it very difficult to meet the wide range of needs amongst its pupil population. Indeed, international schools that have taken on the challenge would appear to be rare.

This enquiry seeks to identify the climate and conditions that allow an international school to respond to diverse learning needs, and attention to the following questions at pupil level will guide the data collection:

- What are the barriers to learning?
- Has the school removed the barriers to learning? If so how?
- How do you know that the barriers have been removed?
- Where barriers remain what are the implications for further school development?

Consent

I hereby consent to participate in the above research project. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may change my mind and refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. I may refuse to answer any questions or I may stop any interviews that I may be asked to participate in. I understand that some of the things that I say may be directly quoted in the text of the final report and subsequent publications, but my name will not be associated with that text.

I hereby agree to participate in the above research:

Participant	Print name	Date
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Principal investigator	Print name	Date
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Witness	Print name	Date
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(After Richards and Morse – 2007)

Appendix 3: Research protocol forms

Removing Barriers to Learning; enabling international schools to respond to diverse needs: identifying the climate and conditions

Research aim and question

This research seeks to identify the climate and the conditions that allow an international school to respond to diverse learning needs. The following questions, posed with respect to each pupil will guide the data collection:

- What are the barriers to learning?
- Has the school removed the barriers to learning? If so how?
- How do you know that the barriers have been removed?
- Where barriers remain what are the implications for further school development?

Protocol Questions

Developing an enquiry protocol and protocol questions according to Yin (2009) is a major way of increasing the reliability of the research and keeping the researcher focused on the topic during data collection. In this research the protocol questions were:

- What is it about the school that enables it to include a wide range of pupils?
- Why does the school do it in this way?
- What are examples of what the school does to include a wide range of pupils?
- On the basis of my visit is there evidence that the school is including?
- What is the range, are there limitations?
- Have I identified the climate and conditions?

The field procedure protocol

Written contact with the head teacher to ascertain if it is possible to carry out the research in the school.	
Visit to the school to discuss the project, get to know the school, and gain written permission to carry out the research.	
Provide the schools with written document to outline the project and gain informed consent so that the persons involved in the child study meeting understand what the study is about, and how the privacy and confidentiality of the subjects throughout the child study will be protected.	
Select pupils, provide parents with written document to outline the project	

and gain informed consent so that the persons involved in the child study meeting understand what the study is about, and how the privacy and confidentiality of the subjects throughout the child study will be protected.	
Receive information from the schools with regard to applying special precautions and protection as children are to be involved, and accessing specialist assistance and advice.	
Provide schools (post/email- telephone contact) with suggested questions to allow pre interview preparation	
Visits to the schools will involve class and playground observations, investigating the facilities, collecting data from interviews, and gathering hard evidence in the form of brochures, policies, guidance and information documents, handbooks, and lesson plans.	

Interview checklist

The interview reports were checked by the interviewees to confirm the evidence collected, and then validated against documentary evidence.

Pupil Mild	Interview transcript checked	Pupil Mod	Interview transcript checked
Initials		Initials	
Parent		Parent	
CT		CT	
LSA		LSA	
LST		LST	
SpTh		SpTh	
OT		OT	

Pupil Intensive	Interview transcript checked
Initials	
Parent	

CT	
LSA	
LST	
SpTh	
OT	

Management	Interview transcript checked
Head of LS	
Elementary Head of LS	
Head of school	

Student documents

IEPs (individual educational plans), reports, assessments.

Mild	Collected	Mod	Collected	Intensive	Collected
IEP	x	IEP	x	IEP	x
Report		Report		Report	

School documents

School organisation: reports, policies, guidelines, handbook, and the school brochure. This documentation was gathered from the school website, letters, diaries, calendars, agendas, minutes of meetings, and administrative documents.

Document	Collected
Policies	
Guidelines	
LS Handbook	x
School Brochure	x
Letters	
Diaries	
Calendars	

Ethics

In the British Educational Research Association's (BERA) revised ethical guidelines (2004) the Principles Underpinning the Guidelines states that

'The Association considers that all educational research should be conducted with an ethic of respect for the person, knowledge, democratic values, the quality of educational research, and academic freedom' (p.5).

As this study is a *'contemporary phenomenon in its real life context'*, (Yin, 2009 p. 73) then the above statements and indeed the guidelines document is of importance. Yin (2009) suggests that the *'care and sensitivity'* (p.73) should involve

- Gaining informed consent so that the persons involved in the case study understand what the study is about
- Eliminating the possibility that any of the subjects could come to harm or be deceived
- Maintaining and protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the subjects throughout the case study
- Applying special precautions, and protection such as only interviewing children in the presence of a known adult.

Jayne Pletser

Appendix 4: Data collection methods

Data collection methods	Date	Notes
Field notes		
First visit	6, 7, 8 March 2011	Develop contextual understanding and identify gaps in knowledge in preparation for the main data collection visit.
Second visit	3, 4, 5, 6, May 2011	Main data collection visit – record information, thoughts and questions to be clarified (see appendix 5b).
Interviews		
Student A	4/5/11	Intensive levels of support
Student B	3/5/11	Moderate levels of support
Student C	5/5/11	Mild Levels of support
Parent A	3/5/11	
Parent B	6/5/11	
Parents C	3/5/11	
Head of school	4/5/11	
Learning support director	5/5/11	
Elementary LS director	6/5/11	
Elementary Head	5/5/11	
Home room class teacher	3/5/11	
Special education class teacher	5/5/11	
Child study meetings		
Student A	5/5/11	
Student B	5/5/11	
Student C	5/5/11	
Observations		
Student A	4/5/11	Special education classroom
Student A	4/5/11	Occupational Therapy
Student A	4/5/11	Choir practice
Student A	4/5/11	In home room
Student B	5/5/11	Co-teaching
Student C	5/5/11	Co-teaching
Documentation		
An introduction to the elementary school	2010/11	
Learning support at ISX	2010/11	
ILP x 3 students	2010/11	Confidential sections not available

Appendix 5: An example of a completed observation form

Pupil: A Date: Time: 10.00 Subject: OT Purpose of observation: - supplement interview	Comments: Occupational Therapy session Evaluation and observations completed at the same time as instructing.
What is the learning target? Build core strength Concentration and focus Strengthen hand choice – no dominance.	Activities Rolling on large ball while counting. Swinging – choice of counts to stimulate vestibular system.
What are the barriers? Vestibular Ability to remain calm, focused, organized and balanced. Poor body awareness – difficulties understanding where body is in relation to space.	OT notes given on a range therapies for reference.
Learning Target: how did he/she demonstrate learning? Copied and demonstrated.	Overlapping Activities Memory – shapes given to fetch and name
Learning strategies observed Overlapping scooter (core strengthening) combined with memory and choosing activities. Swinging Jumping – trampoline Catching while on swing Timed exercises.	
How were the barriers to learning removed, if removed? Vestibular processing Learning/accommodations/modifications, Teaching/resources OT materials and space	Varied lesson – active lesson enjoyed by A. Combining core strength, memory, concentration, colouring to strengthen hand dominance.
Pupil teacher ratio: 2 OTs working in tandem with 1 student (other student sick today) LS pupils in class n/a Co-teaching n/a Staff in room 2	1 OT working with A. 1 OT writing notes and moving equipment.

Class population/make-up? n/a	
Class climate? Hard work but friendly and fun – A enjoyed it and remained motivated throughout.	
Interactions: pupil – pupil, pupil-teacher, teacher-pupil n/a	
Environment: furniture, lighting, seating? OT gym	Golf cart used to get back and forward from classroom to OT room
Other comments:	

Appendix 5b: Field notes – an example

Field notes - Typed up from the handwritten

6/5/11 - morning

Need today to visit the library again – this time check out context of school through the books– International/inclusive context?

Library – elementary

Books on:

Masai – for small children – when at home in US I do but if home in Masai I do.

In family section – My two Uncles (gay family), deaf sister, I am sad, in a wheelchair.

Stories from around the world – various and many languages – how many?

Displays – book and international citizens – empathy.

Task check – go through files and check lists – have I got the data I need?

Reflections on child study meeting:

Team that gels - question each other - discuss learning progress. Negotiation between the team. Respect for each other's' perspective – blending of ideas to develop the strategies based on her needs – connected to her interests.

Challenge to evaluate her learning – is it because she doesn't want to or is it her short attention span and memory? - Much discussion around this.

How best to include her in the trip to Trier? What are the rest of the class doing how involve her learning. Been before so can present a photo of herself and what she was doing. Photos will be taken and she will make a PP as a log of the trip.

Connected, respectful, open, humour (fun), collaborative!!

Appendix 6: Summarised responses to the research questions

Question	Responses and observations	Who
What are the barriers to learning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When there is no definition of learning. • When there is a lack of an understanding that learning is the core business of the organisation. • When a student does not understand the learning process. • When a student cannot self-regulate his/her learning. • When resources are not available to meet learning needs. • When resources are not available to meet behavioural needs. • When access to the curriculum is denied. • When access to co-curricular activities is denied. • When access to social integration is denied. • When collaboration with the family is difficult or non-existent. • When cultural expectations inhibit the acceptance of learning needs. • When support transfers to helplessness; 'someone will do it for me'. 	SMT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When frustration levels are high. • When there is a lack of understanding of metacognitive processes. • When there is a mismatch between the instructor and student. • When there is a lack of differentiation. 	Educators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When I am not supported in my learning • When feedback doesn't tell me how to get better. • When the teacher does not know the student. 	Students
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The time and contact with the teacher. • The teacher was not good for him. • The ILP objectives were not clear – how can you measure that the goal has been reached? 	Parent
Has the school removed barriers to learning and if so how?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning has been defined. • Learning standards have been defined. • There is a constant focus on the learning cycle. • Students are taught to understand how the learning process works and how it is different from the content. • Students are taught to self-regulate their learning. • Teaching standards have been defined. • Professional and school development is focused on 5 defined pedagogical practices. • All meetings are structured around the 5 defined 	SMT

	<p>pedagogical practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional and school development is focused on teaching students what learning is, how it happens and how to learn. • The curriculum converges cognitive and affective learning. • We have removed barriers between students so that they may learn together. • We accept there is a massive emotional context to learning, we don't learn if we are scared, we don't learn well under stress. • Inclusion has developed over a long period through small incremental steps. • Our school board is selected; smart people from our community that support the vision. • There is a continuity of vision. • Learning is made exciting. • Staffing and organisational structures are in place to promote the philosophy that all children will learn optimally. • Learning is scaffolded. • Learning difficulties are circumvented by offering alternative pathways. • Learning is focussed on what students are good at. • We think about learning access and how students will access? • We think about learning experiences and how do we staff and structure to provide them? • We have terrific staffing levels which include a range of experts. • We have specialists deeply embedded in the team. • We are all responsible for removing barriers to learning. • Everyone benefits from the services. • We have good administrative policies that focus on the mission. • We hire teachers who believe this is the right thing to do, who differentiate and want to continue to develop. • Inclusion is a core expectation of every single teacher. • Inclusion is defined; 'managing a number of student needs successfully'. • The core business of learning is managed and monitored. • We bring in really top notch trainers. • We run voluntary summer institutes for professional development. • The ILP was designed to be a useable document, a reference point. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She is often in classes with a co teacher and that helps a lot. 	
How does the school know that the barriers have been removed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners take responsibility for their learning. • We use a lot of data. • We have different indicators that we look at, and a balance of indicators; not dependent upon a single data point. • Beyond the quantitative stuff we use anecdotal and observational information about a child's wellbeing and ability to flourish in a learning climate. • We track the assessment data, we observe and we ask; the combination of hard and soft data is pretty compelling. • Appraisal. • When students feel that they are successful. • When students leave us with successful opportunities. • Through parent feedback. • We interview the child and look at the bigger picture and consider learning growth. 	<p>Educator</p> <p>SMT</p>
Where barriers exist what are the implications for further school development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning support should be given in the mother tongue language. • More measurements should be made so that progress can be measured. • Teachers should be replaced quickly in the event of a mismatch between student and teacher. • The high achieving and high potential students and how we are enabling them to make as much growth as they possibly can is one of the next priorities. • We need to critically analyse and assess what is really important when making school development decisions. • The implications are is that we have to work really, really hard case by case to do the best for each student. • We need very skilled professionals who are not afraid to have those tough conversations with parents and staff. • The implication is that teachers have to be extraordinary professional. • Space is becoming a barrier and needs to be considered. 	<p>Parent</p> <p>SMT</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued focus on data collection which takes away the judgment and keeps us real. • We are considering what tools students will need to be successful in their world in 2020? • Choosing the right people and professional development so that they have the best strategies that are available to them. 	Educators
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Appendix 7: Interpretations of inclusion - stakeholder perspectives

	Staff	Parents	Students
Models of inclusion	<p>Social model: removing barriers to learning for their students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Everyone is responsible for removing barriers to learning. -Learning is the core business and understood by the whole community. -The process of learning and metacognition is developed to support independence and self-advocacy in all learners. -We look for solutions rather than saying this is a problem. -We have removed the barrier that isolates students in social settings. -Resources are made available to support individual needs. <div> <p>Implications for school practice</p> <p>The vision and mission of the school is linked to inclusive teaching and learning.</p> <p>PD - Professional learning is linked to extending access and participation.</p> <p>PD - Professional learning is school community wide.</p> <p>Staffing is appropriate to support inclusion.</p> <p>Resourcing is appropriate.</p> <p>Policies – are developed that link the mission and vision with inclusive practices.</p> </div>	<p>Deficit model: learning issues located within the student.</p> <p>Diagnostic testing when identified by parents</p> <p>Social model.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Listens to the therapist that I employ -Supporting parents with differing mother tongues. -Parents along with students and educators are considered partners when planning learning. -Co-teaching helps a lot. -Early diagnosis and intervention. -Suggestion: Learning support in mother tongue. <div> <p>Implications for school practice</p> <p>Develop common understandings of inclusion across the school community; many models of inclusion exist in a diverse, international school population.</p> <p>Staffing – recruit experienced staff.</p> <p>Provide tools to support inclusion (software).</p> <p>Create quieter spaces for learning.</p> <p>Staffing - to provide experts in the use of diagnostics to support inclusive teaching and learning as opposed to confirming medical deficit models.</p> <p>Staffing - to co-teach.</p> <p>Time - to meet with parents.</p> <p>Resources – quieter spaces</p> </div>	<p>Social model: removing barriers to learning - Important that schools should get to know the students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The school makes you comfortable with your surroundings – first day with no English. -Teachers write feedback that indicates what has to be done to improve. -Peer support. -Contact time – teachers always available. -Specialists (English language, speech and language) to support learning. <div> <p>Implications for school practice</p> <p>Develop the social and emotional elements of learning (in addition to the cognitive aspects) so that all members understand how to create a sense of welcome.</p> <p>Support effective feedback and its importance in the learning cycle.</p> <p>Facilitating peers in the learning cycle.</p> <p>Staffing - optimal contact with students.</p> <p>Staffing - specialists.</p> <p>Timetabling - specialists.</p> </div>
Inclusive Learning	<p>Learning is defined, scaffolded and made exciting.</p> <p>Learning difficulties are circumvented by offering alternative pathways.</p> <p>Students understand the difference between the learning process and learning content.</p> <p>Learning access is considered.</p> <p>Learning goals are realistic.</p>	<p>PD for all members of the community to develop common understanding, change mindsets to create belonging for the whole community.</p> <p>PD to incorporate smarter goal setting.</p> <p>Parents are partners when planning learning.</p> <p>Quieter special education</p>	<p>PD for all members of the community - SEL alongside cognitive learning.</p> <p>PD – using effective feedback to promote learning.</p> <p>Availability of teachers to support learning.</p>

	Learning goals are transferred to life skills.	classrooms.	
Inclusive Teaching	<p>Collaborative teaching; co-teaching has been implemented.</p> <p>Educators and experts collaborate to inform teaching and learning.</p> <p>Learning activities are overlapped with therapy activities.</p> <p>School transitions are supported</p> <p>Teaching standards have been defined.</p>	<p>Teachers to create smarter learning goals that better measure progress.</p> <p>Teach for independence in learning and later life.</p> <p>Experienced teachers.</p> <p>Use monitoring tools to support inclusion</p>	<p>Teaching to address social, emotional and cognitive aspects of learning.</p> <p>Facilitating the use of peers in the learning cycle.</p>
School organisation	<p>Inclusion is defined and linked to the mission and vision.</p> <p>PD - Professional and school development is focused on teaching students what learning is, how it happens and how to learn.</p> <p>Data - The core business of learning is managed and monitored.</p> <p>School development SD - Inclusive school development has entailed long term planning.</p> <p>SD - Small incremental steps over a long period of time has contributed to success.</p> <p>Staffing - Appropriate staffing levels are maintained.</p> <p>Staffing - Experts are hired and are deeply embedded in the team.</p> <p>Staffing – Co-teachers are hired.</p> <p>Policies - Administrative policies that focus on the mission and increasing access and participation.</p> <p>Staffing - Teachers are hired who believe in inclusion, who differentiate and are committed to personal development.</p> <p>Staff performance - Inclusion is a core expectation of every single teacher.</p> <p>Staffing – A student case manager is appointed to lead on the process of developing and writing the student's learning plan.</p>	<p>Staffing - changing teachers to optimise educator student relationships.</p> <p>Staffing to provide diagnostic expertise.</p> <p>Staffing of experienced teachers.</p> <p>Staffing to co-teach.</p> <p>Staffing for early interventions.</p> <p>Finance, plan for and facilitate PD to increase whole community learning.</p> <p>PD to develop common understandings.</p> <p>PD to create SMARTer ILP goals.</p> <p>Resources and Tools to support inclusion.</p> <p>Quieter spaces for learning in the special education classroom.</p> <p>Time for optimal contact with parents.</p>	<p>Finance, plan and facilitate PD to increase whole community learning.</p> <p>PD – social and emotional learning in combination with cognitive learning.</p> <p>PD – effective feedback.</p> <p>Staffing for optimal contact with students.</p> <p>Staffing specialists.</p> <p>Resources</p> <p>Timetabling – optimizing timetables to incorporate therapies and specialist appointments.</p>

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Appendix 8: Themes and categories arising from the interviews and the child study meetings

	School Groups Interviewed				
Theme and categories	Senior Management Team SMT x4	Educator x2	Student x3	Parent x4	Child study meetings x3
LEARNING					
Definition	x				
Metacognition	x	x	x		x
Student Learning	x			Peer support	x
Educator Learning	x	x			
Parent Learning	x				
Assessment data	x				x
Self-advocacy for learning	x				
ILP process	x				
Climate	x		x		x
Culture	x	x			x
Transitions for Learning					x
Difficult conversations	x				x
Resources (for learning)	x	x		x	x

TEACHING STRATEGIES					
Differentiation	x				x
Co-teaching	x			x	
For Special Education	x				

INCLUSION					
Definition	x				
Limits	x				
Culture	x				
Belonging		x	x		
Campus		x			x
Discourse of	x	x	(older student)		x

	School Groups interviewed				
Theme and focused codes	Senior Management Team SMT x4	Educator x2	Student x3	Parent x4	Child study meetings x3
SCHOOL ORGANISATION					
International inclusive characteristics	x				
Time management	x				
Staffing provision	x	x		x	
Staffing recruitment	x				
Recruitment /appraisal	x				
School development	x			x	
Curriculum	x	x			
Partnerships	x			x	
Finance	x				
Admissions/Access	x				
Leadership	x	x			
Collaboration	x	x			x
Data	x				
Looking for solutions	x				x

Appendix 9: A comparison of the themes that emerged from the interviews, child study meetings, and the documentation.

	Comparison of themes	
Themes and categories	Interviews and case studies	Documentation
LEARNING		
Definition	x	
Metacognition	x	x
Student	x	x
Educator/PD	x	x
Parent	x	x
Assessment data	x	x
Self-advocacy	x	x
ILP process	x	x
Climate	x	x
Culture	x	x
Transitions		x
Difficult conversations	x	
TEACHING STRATEGIES		
Differentiation	x	x
Co-teaching	x	x
-for Special Education	x	x

INCLUSION		
Definition	x	x
Limits	x	x
Culture	x	x
Belonging	x	x
Campus	x	x
Discourse of	x	

	Comparison of themes	
Theme	Interviews and case studies	Documentation
SCHOOL ORGANISATION		
International inclusive characteristics	x	x
Time management	x	
Staffing provision	x	x
Staffing recruitment	x	
Recruitment - appraisal	x	
Long term school development	x	
Curriculum	x	x
Partnerships	x	x
Finance	x	x
Admissions/Access	x	x
Leadership	x	

Solution focused	x	
Collaboration	x	x
Data driven	x	x
Looking for solutions	x	